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# THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A.

LATE REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



*IN THREE VOLUMES*

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TO

Sir Garnet Wolseley,

THE MOST DISTINGUISHED LIVING REPRESENTATIVE

OF

THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

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## P R E F A C E.

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**W**HEN twelve years ago Mr. Gladstone undertook to restore health to Ireland, many persons acquainted with the country believed that he was dealing with the outward symptoms merely of a disorder of which he mistook the nature, and that the measures which he was adopting would make the patient rather worse than better.

The type of Irish agitation is so unchanging that the disease at all times is obviously the same. Various modes of treatment have been tried for it, and tried unsuccessfully; and the political physician should thus have unusual means of learning the effect to be looked for from this or that proposed remedy. It did not appear, however, ten years ago, from the language of Mr. Gladstone and the supporters of his policy, that they had taken advantage of their opportunities. They talked vaguely and violently of past mistakes, but they betrayed an imperfect acquaintance with the character of those mistakes. The subject itself indeed seemed never to have been adequately studied; and the most important authorities were only accessible in manuscript.

A scientific account of the past can be the work only of many persons, one correcting the errors of another and adding something of his own. I undertook for myself to

give as faithful a description as I could produce of the state of Ireland in the last century. The chapter of Irish history between the surrender of Limerick and the Act of Union is complete in itself. It opens with conquest and submission. It ends with another rebellion, and the collapse of the form of government which we had established. I examined the story in the correspondence which passed between the English and Irish Administrations during the whole period, in the proceedings of the Irish Parliament, and in the voluminous and miscellaneous reports on the condition of the country, which are preserved in Dublin Castle. The result was the present book, which was originally published seven years ago. The effect of Mr. Gladstone's legislation has been precisely what my inferences would have led me to anticipate; and that a new edition of the book is now called for implies, I hope, a belief that at the present crisis it may not be wholly uninformative.

I have added a Supplementary Chapter; and I have used the opportunity to correct a few mistakes of detail which Sir Bernard Burke has kindly pointed out to me. Sir Bernard Burke has charge of the Dublin State Papers, and I have to thank him warmly for the courteous assistance which he has rendered to me throughout.

J. A. FROUDE.

*Onslow Gardens,  
January, 1881.*

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**THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND.**



# BOOK I.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY.

#### SECTION I.

**W**HEN two countries, or sections of countries, stand geographically so related to one another that their union under a common government will conduce to the advantage of the stronger people, such countries will continue separate as long only as the country which desires to preserve its independence possesses a power of resistance so vigorous that the effort to overcome it is too exhausting to be permanently maintained.

A natural right to liberty, irrespective of the ability to defend it, exists in nations as much as and no more than it exists in individuals. Had nature meant us to live uncontrolled by any will but our own, we should have been so constructed that the pleasures of one would not interfere with the pleasures of another, or that each of us would discharge by instinct those duties which the welfare of the community requires from all. In a world in which we are made

to depend so largely for our well-being on the conduct of our neighbours, and yet are created infinitely unequal in ability and worthiness of character, the superior part has a natural right to govern; the inferior part has a natural right to be governed; and a rude but adequate test of superiority and inferiority is provided in the relative strength of the different orders of human beings.

Among wild beasts and savages might constitutes right. Among reasonable beings right is for ever tending to create might. Inferiority of numbers is compensated by superior cohesiveness, intelligence, and daring. The better sort of men submit willingly to be governed by those who are nobler and wiser than themselves; organization creates superiority of force; and the ignorant and the selfish may be and are justly compelled for their own advantage to obey a rule which rescues them from their natural weakness. There neither is nor can be an inherent privilege in any person or set of persons to live unworthily at their own wills, when they can be led or driven into more honourable courses; and the rights of man—if such rights there be—are not to liberty, but to wise direction and control.

Individuals cannot be independent, or society cannot exist. With individuals the contention is not for freedom absolutely, but for an extension of the limits within which their freedom must be restrained. The independence of nations is spoken of sometimes as if it rested on another foundation—as if each separate

race or community had a divine titledeed to dispose of its own fortunes, and develop its tendencies in such direction as seems good to itself. But the assumption breaks down before the enquiry, What constitutes a nation? And the right of a people to self-government consists and can consist in nothing but their power to defend themselves. No other definition is possible. Are geographical boundaries, is a distinct frontier, made the essential? Mountain chains, rivers, or seas form, no doubt, the normal dividing lines between nation and nation, because they are elements of strength, and material obstacles to invasion. But as the absence of a defined frontier cannot take away a right to liberty where there is strength to maintain it, a mountain barrier conveys no prerogative against a power which is powerful enough to overleap that barrier, nor the ocean against those whose larger skill and courage can convert the ocean into a highway.

As little can a claim to freedom be made coincident with race or language. When the ties of kindred and of speech have force enough to bind together a powerful community, such a community may be able to defend its independence; but if it cannot, the pretension in itself has no claim on consideration. Distinctions of such a kind are merely fanciful and capricious. All societies of men are, in the nature of things, forced into relations with other societies of men. They exchange obligations, confer benefits, or inflict injuries on each other. They are natural friends or natural rivals; and unite, or else find themselves in

collision, when the weaker is compelled to give way. The individual has to sacrifice his independence to his family, the family to the tribe; the tribe merges itself in some larger community; and the time at which these successive surrenders of liberty are demanded depends practically on nothing else than the inability to persist in separation. Where population is scanty and habits are peaceful, the head of each household may be sovereign over his children and servants, owing no allegiance to any higher chief or law. As among the Cyclops—

*θεμιστεύει ἕκαστος*

*παίδων ἢδ' ἀλόχων οὐδ' ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσιν.*

Necessity and common danger drive families into alliance for self-defence; the smaller circles of independence lose themselves in ampler areas; and those who refuse to conform to the new authority are either required to take themselves elsewhere, or, if they remain and persist in disobedience, may be treated as criminals.

A tribe, if local circumstances are favourable, may defend its freedom against a more powerful neighbour, so long as the independence of such a tribe is a lesser evil than the cost of its subjugation; but an independence so protracted is rarely other than a misfortune. On the whole, and as a rule, superior strength is the equivalent of superior merit; and when a weaker people are induced or forced to part with their separate existence, and are not treated as subjects, but are admitted freely to share the privileges of the nation in which they are absorbed, they forfeit nothing

which they need care to lose, and rather gain than suffer by the exchange. It is possible that a nobler people may, through force of circumstances, or great numerical inferiority, be oppressed for a time by the brute force of baser adversaries; just as, within the limits of a nation, particular classes may be tyrannized over, or opinions which prove in the end true, may be put down by violence, and the professors of such opinions persecuted. But the effort of nature is constantly to redress the balance. Where freedom is so precious that without it life is unendurable, men with those convictions fight too fiercely to be permanently subdued. Truth grows by its own virtue, and falsehood sinks and fades. An oppressed cause, when it is just, attracts friends, and commands moral support, which converts itself sooner or later into material strength. As a broad principle it may be said, that as nature has so constituted us that we must be ruled in some way, and as at any given time the rule inevitably will be in the hands of those who are then the strongest, so nature also has allotted superiority of strength to superiority of intellect and character; and in deciding that the weaker shall obey the more powerful, she is in reality saving them from themselves, and then most confers true liberty when she seems most to be taking it away. There is no freedom possible to man except in obedience to law; and those who cannot prescribe a law to themselves, if they desire to be free must be content to accept direction from others. The right to resist depends on the power



of resistance. A nation which can maintain its independence possesses already, unless assisted by extraordinary advantages of situation, the qualities which conquest can only justify itself by conferring. It may be held to be as good in all essential conditions as the nation which is endeavouring to overcome it; and human society has rather lost than gained when a people loses its freedom which knows how to make a wholesome use of freedom. But when resistance has been tried and failed—when the inequality has been proved beyond dispute by long and painful experience—the wisdom, and ultimately the duty, of the weaker party is to accept the benefits which are offered in exchange for submission: and a nation which at once will not defend its liberties in the field, nor yet allow itself to be governed, but struggles to preserve the independence which it wants the spirit to uphold in arms, by insubordination and anarchy and secret crime, may bewail its wrongs in wild and weeping eloquence in the ears of mankind,—may at length, in a time when the methods by which sterner ages repressed this kind of conduct are unpermitted, make itself so intolerable as to be cast off and bidden go upon its own bad way: but it will not go for its own benefit; it will have established no principle, and vindicated no natural right; liberty profits only those who can govern themselves better than others can govern them, and those who are able to govern themselves wisely have no need to petition for a privilege which they can keep or take for themselves.

## SECTION II.

IN the scene before Harfleur, in the play of Henry the Fifth, there are introduced representatives of the three nations which remained unsubdued after England was conquered by the Normans, and the co-ordination of which, under a common sovereignty, was a problem still waiting to be accomplished. Careless always of antiquarian pedantry, Shakespeare drew men and women as he saw them round him, in the London of his own day; and Fluellen, Captain Jamie, and Captain Macmorris were the typical Welshman, Scot, and Irishman, as they were to be met with in Elizabeth's trainbands.

Fluellen, hot-blooded, voluble, argumentative, is yet most brave, most loyal, and most honourable. Among his thousand characters there is not one which Shakespeare has sketched more tenderly, or with a more loving and affectionate irony. Captain Jamie is 'a marvellous falerous gentleman,' well read in the ancient wars, learned 'in the disciplines of the Romans,' and able to hold discourse on them with any man, but shrewd and silent, more prone to listen than to speak, more given to blows than to words, and determined only 'to do good service, or ligge in the ground for it.' Macmorris, though no less brave than his companions, ready to stand in the breach while 'there were throats to be cut, or work to be done,'

yet roars, rants, boasts, swears by his father's soul, and threatens to cut off any man's head who dares to say that he is as good as himself.

Captain Jamie never mentions Scotland: we learn his country from his dialect, and from what others say of him. Fluellen, a Welshman to the last fibre, yet traces his Welsh leek to the good service which Welshmen did, 'in a garden where leeks did grow,' at Crecy, under the English Edward. He delights in thinking that all the waters of the Wye cannot wash his Majesty's Welsh blood out of his body. Macmorris, at the mention of his nation, as if on the watch for insults from Saxon or Briton, blazes into purposeless fury. 'My nation! What ish my nation? Is a villain, and a bastard, and a knave, and a rascal? What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation?'

Had William fallen at Hastings instead of Harold, and had the Norman invasion failed, it is likely that the Lowland Scots would have followed the example of Northumberland, and have drifted gradually into combination with the rest of the island. The Conquest made the difficulty greater; but if the Norman kings had been content to wait for the natural action of time, increasing intercourse and an obvious community of interest would have probably antedated the Union by several centuries. The premature violence of Edward the First hardened Scotland irrecoverably into a separate nationality. The determination to defend their independence created the patriotic virtues which enabled the Northern Britons to hold at

bay their larger rival. The Union, when it came about at last, was effected on equal terms. Two separate self-governed peoples entered slowly and deliberately into voluntary partnership on terms of mutual respect. The material wealth which Scotland contributed to the empire was comparatively insignificant; but she introduced into it a race of men who had been hammered to a temper which made them more valuable than mountains of gold; and among the elements of greatness in the country known to later history as Great Britain, the rugged Scotch resolution to resist conquest to the death, tried in a hundred battles, holds a place second to none.

The Lowland Scots were Teutons; the language of the Lothians was not distinguishable from the language of Northumberland; and the Union with Scotland might have seemed so far an easier feat than the Union with Wales. On the other hand, the Welsh were fewer in number, less protected by situation, less able to obtain help from other quarters. They were neither slaves nor cowards. They loved their freedom, they fought for it long and desperately, rising again and again when civil wars in England offered them a gleam of hope. When resistance became obviously hopeless, they loyally and wisely accepted their fate. They had not to suffer from prolonged severity, for severity was unnecessary. There was no general confiscation, no violent interference with local habits or usages. They preserved their language with singular success, and their cus-

toms so far as their customs were compatible with English law; while in exchange for independence they were admitted to the privileges of English citizenship in as full measure as the English themselves. They continued proud of their nationality, vain with true Celtic vanity of pedigrees which lose themselves in infinity. Yet, being wisely handled, restrained only in essentials, and left to their own way in the ordinary current of their lives, they were contented to forget their animosities; they ceased to pine after political liberty which they were consciously unable to preserve; and finding themselves accepted on equal terms as joint inheritors of a magnificent empire, the iron chain became a golden ornament. Their sensibilities were humoured in the title of the heir of the crown. In bestowing a dynasty upon England they found a gratification for their honourable pride. If they have contributed less of positive strength than the Scots to the British empire, they have never been its shame or its weakness; and the retention of a few harmless peculiarities has not prevented them from being wholesome and worthy members of the United Commonwealth.

Ireland, the last of the three countries of which England's interest demanded the annexation, was by nature better furnished than either of them with means to resist her approaches. Instead of a narrow river for a frontier, she had seventy miles of dangerous sea. She had a territory more difficult to penetrate, and a population greatly more numerous. The

courage of the Irish was undisputed. From the first mention of the Irishman in history, faction fight and foray have been the occupation and the delight of his existence. The hardihood of the Irish kern was proverbial throughout Europe. The Irish soldiers, in the regular service of France and Spain, covered themselves with distinction, were ever honoured with the most dangerous posts, have borne their share in every victory. In our own ranks they have formed half the strength of our armies, and detraction has never challenged their right to an equal share in the honour which those armies have won. Yet, in their own country, in their efforts to shake off English supremacy, their patriotism has evaporated in words. No advantage of numbers has availed them; no sacred sense of hearth and home has stirred their nobler nature. An unappeasable discontent has been attended with the paralysis of manliness; and, with a few accidental exceptions, continually recurring insurrections have only issued in absolute and ever disgraceful defeat.

Could Ireland have but fought as Scotland fought she would have been mistress of her own destinies. In a successful struggle for freedom, she would have developed qualities which would have made her worthy of possessing it. She would have been one more independent country added to the commonwealth of nations; and her history would have been another honourable and inspiring chapter among the brighter records of mankind. She might have stood alone;

she might have united herself, had she so pleased, with England on fair and equal conditions; or she might have preferred alliances with the Continental powers. There is no disputing against strength, nor happily is there need to dispute, for the strength which gives a right to freedom, implies the presence of those qualities which ensure that it will be rightly used. No country can win and keep its freedom in the presence of a dangerous rival, unless it be on the whole a well and justly governed country; and where there is just government the moral ground is absent on which conquest can be defended or desired.

Again, could Ireland, on discovering like the Welsh that she was too weak or too divided to encounter England in the field, have acquiesced as the Welsh acquiesced, in the alternative of submission, there was not originally any one advantage which England possessed which she was not willing and eager to share with her. If England was to become a great power, the annexation of Ireland was essential to her, if only to prevent the presence there of an enemy; but she had everything to lose by treating her as a conquered province, seizing her lands, and governing her by force; everything to gain by conciliating the Irish people, extending to them the protection of her own laws, the privileges of her own higher civilization, and assimilating them on every side, so far as their temperament allowed, to her subjects at home.

Yet Ireland would neither resist courageously, nor would she honourably submit. Her chiefs and leaders

had no real patriotism. In Scotland, though the nobles might quarrel among themselves, they buried their feuds and stood side by side when there was danger from the hereditary foe. There was never a time when there was not an abundance of Irish who would make common cause with the English when there was a chance of revenge upon a domestic enemy, or a chance merely of spoil to be distributed. All alike, though they would make no stand for liberty, as little could endure order or settled government. Their insurrections, which might have deserved sympathy had they been honourable efforts to shake off an alien yoke, were disfigured with crimes which, on one memorable occasion at least, brought shame on their cause and name. When insurrection finally failed, they betook themselves to assassination and secret tribunals; and all this, while they were holding up themselves and their wrongs as if they were the victims of the most abominable tyranny, and inviting the world to judge between them and their oppressors.

Nations are not permitted to achieve independence on these terms. Unhappily, though unable to shake off the authority of England, they were able to irritate her into severities which gave their accusations some show of colour. Everything which she most valued for herself—her laws and liberties, her orderly and settled government, the most ample security for person and property—England's first desire was to give to Ireland in fullest measure. The temper in which she was met exasperated her into harshness



and at times to cruelty ; and so followed in succession alternations of revolt and punishment, severity provoked by rebellion, and breeding in turn fresh cause for mutiny, till it seemed at last as if no solution of the problem was possible save the expulsion or destruction of a race which appeared incurable.

## SECTION III.

THERE are many ways in which a conquered but still reluctant people may be dealt with, when the interest of the conquerors is rather in the country itself than in the inhabitants who occupy it. They may be exterminated, either wholly, as the Red races are being exterminated in North America, or in part, as the Gauls were by Cæsar, and the Mexicans by Cortes and his successors; or they may be held continuously down by the sword, as the North of Italy was held by Austria; or, again, armed colonists may be settled on the soil who, in exchange for land on easy terms, undertake the maintenance of order, as was done in Ulster under James the First, and in Leinster and Munster by Cromwell.

The Norman occupation of Ireland in the twelfth century differed materially from all and any of these methods. The Normans were not properly colonists; they were a military aristocracy whose peculiar mission was to govern men. When a tract of land was allotted to a Norman baron, it was not at first an estate out of which to extract rents to spend upon his own pleasures, so much as a fief, over which he was a ruler responsible to the crown. The Irish, when the Normans took charge of them, were, with the exception of the clergy, scarcely better than a mob of armed savages. They had no settled industry and no settled

habitations, and scarcely a conception of property. The poor-spirited and the weak were told off for such wretched tillage as could not be dispensed with. The only occupation considered honourable was fighting and plunder; and each tribe roamed within its own limits, supported either by the pillage of its neighbours or the wild cattle which wandered through the forests. They had some human traits. They were fond of music and ballad-singing. They were devout after a fashion of their own; and among the monks and friars there were persons who had pretensions to learning. But the religion of the Irish Celts, which three centuries earlier had burnt like a star in Western Europe, had degenerated into a superstition, and no longer served as a check upon the most ferocious passions. When Giraldus Cambrensis was sent by Henry the Second to report on Ireland, their chief characteristics were treachery, thirst for blood, unbridled licentiousness, and inveterate detestation of order and rule.<sup>1</sup> To

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<sup>1</sup> Giraldus attributes the moral condition of the people to the neglect of the bishops and clergy. 'In episcopis et prælatis,' he says, 'hoc fere solum reprehensionis dignum invenio quod in populi tam enormiter delinquentis correctione desides nimis sunt et negligentes. . . . Si prælati a tempore Patricii per tot annorum curricula prædicationi et instructioni item increpationi et correptioni pro officii debito viriliter institissent et prænotatas gentis enormitates aliquatenus extirpas-

sent, aliquam in eis procul dubio formam honestatis et religionis impressissent. Sed non fuit in ipsis qui tanquam tuba vocem exaltaret.'

They lived, he said, retired in their cloisters, given up to contemplation.

'Hujus terræ prælati intra ecclesiarum septa de antiquâ consuetudine se continent, contemplationi solum fere semper indulgent. . . . Unde accidit ut nec verbum Dei populo prædicent nec scelera eorum eis annuntient nec in

such a people, needing bit and bridle, liberty was only mischievous, and the Normans came to take direction of them. How their coming was brought about in detail—how Dermot MacMurrough, prince of Leinster, was driven out and fled for help to England—how he made himself a vassal of Henry the Second—under a compact already sanctioned in the famous grant of Ireland by Pope Adrian—this and the history of the conquest which followed does not need repeating. The Normans in occupying both England and Ireland were but fulfilling the work for which they were specially qualified and gifted, and the grant of Adrian was but the seal of approbation by the spiritual ruler of Christendom. They did not destroy the Irish people; they took the government of them merely, as the English have done in India, dispossessing the chiefs, changing

grege commisso vel extirpent vitia vel inserant virtutes.'—*Topographia Hibernica*, Distinctio iii. cap. 28.

There has always been a difficulty in understanding how, among so lawless a people, the churches and monasteries escaped destruction. The supernatural character attaching to the clergy was perhaps in part the cause. Giraldus, however, says, that some stronger protection was required, and attributes it to the power of an Irish saint's curse, and his quick, sharp promptitude in pronouncing it. 'Hoc autem mihi notabile videtur quod sicut nationis istius homines hâc in vitâ mortali præ aliis gentibus impatientes et præcipientes sunt ad vindic-

tam, sic et in morte vitali meritis jam excelsi præ aliarum regionum sanctis, *animi vindicis esse videntur*. Nec alia mihi ratio eventus hujus occurrit nisi quoniam gens Hibernica castellis carens, prædonibus abundans, ecclesiarum potius refugiis quam castrorum municipiis, et præcipue ecclesiastici viri seque suaque tueri solent, divinâ providentiâ simul et indulgentiâ, gravi frequentique animadversione in ecclesiarum hostes opus fuerat; ut et sic ab ecclesiasticâ pace impiorum pravitas procul arceatur et ipsis ecclesiis ab irreverenti populo debita veneratio vel serviliter exhibeatur'—*Topographia Hibernica*, Distinctio ii. cap. 55.

the loose order of inheritance into an orderly succession, giving security to life and property, and enabling those who cared to be industrious to reap the fruits of their labours without fear of outrage and plunder. Their right to govern lay in their capability of governing and in the need of the Irish to be governed. The Pope may have had in view other objects of his own. The Irish Church claimed immunities from the Roman jurisdiction which the irony of fate selected the Anglo-Normans to abrogate. Celtic Ireland was neither Papal, nor inclined to submit itself to the Papacy, till Henry the Second riveted the Roman yoke upon them. But the true justification of the conquest lay in the character of the conquerors. They were born rulers of men, and were forced, by the same necessity which has brought the decrepit kingdoms of Asia under the authority of England and Russia, to take the management, eight centuries ago, of the anarchic nations of Western Europe.

Nor did Ireland fail on the outset to profit by their presence. For two centuries after the landing of Strongbow and Fitzstephen large sections of the country were subdued into some kind of order and arrangement. The Celtic chiefs were driven into the mountains. Fitzgeralds, Lacies, De Burghs, De Courcies, Blakes, Butlers, Fitzurzes took the places of M'Carthy's, O'Neils, O'Briens, O'Sullivan's, and O'Connors. Those of the old race who remained in the homes of their fathers were compelled to conform to some kind of rule. The new-comers rooted them-

selves into the soil, built castles, gathered about them retainers of their own blood, who overmastered, held down, and, in some degree, transformed the wild and wayward vagabonds, whom they forced to become their subjects. The work begun by the Danes was carried on and developed. Seaport towns—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Limerick—of which the sea-rovers from the Baltic had laid the foundations, were enlarged, strengthened, surrounded with walls, and governed like English cities. Trading ships went and came. Outside the fortifications, and within the shelter of their garrisons, round Dublin especially, the country became settled and cultivated. Tenants took leases of lands and raised houses on them; while in the interior, with incessant fighting and arduous police work which knew neither end nor respite, the heads of the Norman families hammered the unwilling metal of the Celts into some consistency, and forced them into habits less extravagantly wild and confused. The four provinces were mapped out into districts. Inland towns were raised, fortified, and provided with sovereigns (mayors) and aldermen, and the forms, at least, of free municipal institutions. Sheriffs and magistrates were chosen; and the Brehon traditions—a code of customs in which crime had become a word without meaning, and the most savage murders could be paid for with a cow or a sheep—began to yield before the English common law, as quiet and industry recognized the need and value of protection. The progress was slow. The prospect seemed often

desperate. Unstable as water, the Irish temperament wanted cohesiveness to bear the shapes which were imprinted on it. And the work was the harder because—and it is the same difficulty which has been at once the honour and perplexity of English relations with Ireland from first to last—because the efforts of the conquerors was to govern the Irish not as a vassal province but as a free nation; to extend the forms of English liberty—her trials by jury, her local courts, her parliaments—to a people essentially unfit for them; and, while governing Ireland, to teach her at the same time the harder lesson to govern herself.

In contrast with the age which succeeded it, the century of Irish life which followed the Conquest was comparatively humane and rational. Authority was a real thing; and it might have seemed that, by the side of the Anglo-Norman civilization which was shaping itself into consistency in England, a Norman-Celtic society, parallel to it though with subsidiary differences, was tending to form itself with equal firmness in the sister island. But the same causes which, at a later period, undermined the Protestant ascendancy were at work with equal potency four hundred years before.

## SECTION IV.

A CONQUERING race can retain its human characteristics, unaffected by the local influences and tendencies of the people by which it is surrounded, as long only as it preserves the most intimate relations with its kindred elsewhere. Unless strengthened by a continuous stream of importation, the pure blood of the conquerors declines. They recruit themselves by intermarriages with the natives. They form alliances and friendships; they find the work of government more easy by humoring the customs and imitating the manners which they see round them; and when human beings are thrown together, especially if there is no difference of religion to keep them apart, it is at once inevitable that kindly associations shall rise between them, and the character of both will tend to assume a coloring in which the points of agreement will be more visible than the points of difference. Were the English in India cut off by any sudden convulsion from their native country, they would still probably, if they so wished, be able to maintain their sovereignty, but it would be at the expense of becoming themselves Orientalized. Were there nothing else to produce a change, their children would inevitably catch a tone from their servants and nurses. Native wives and mistresses would work alteration in the blood; and, in spite of Christianity, six or seven generations would find them half



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find them half transmuted into an Asiatic type. The Normans in England, though many of them retained their estates in France, and went and came, and French continued for centuries the language of the court, and, for a time, it seemed as if England might become a mere appanage of the Plantagenets' continental dominions, yet in each generation approached closer to the Saxons, till at length the distinction disappeared. Their Irish kindred, filtered many of them first through Wales, and in the process already partially Celticized, were exposed to trials infinitely more severe. Those to whom Ireland was distasteful refused to make their homes there, and forsook it not to return. Those who remained were left for the most part to themselves. The Irish Sea, thrice the breadth of the Straits of Dover, cut them off from their old connections. Surrounded by swarms of enemies, they had to stand by such strength as they could rally to them on the spot, and they made the most of such of the Irish as they could persuade into loyalty. In the Irish character too they came in contact with elements peculiarly fitted to work upon them. From a combination of causes—some creditable to them, some other than creditable—the Irish Celts possess on their own soil a power greater than any other known family of mankind of assimilating those who venture among them to their own image. Light-hearted, humorous, imaginative, susceptible through the entire range of feeling, from the profoundest pathos to the most playful jest, if they possess some

real virtues they possess the counterfeits of a hundred more. Passionate in everything—passionate in their patriotism, passionate in their religion, passionately courageous, passionately loyal and affectionate—they are without the manliness which will give strength and solidity to the sentimental part of their dispositions; while the surface and show is so seductive and so winning that only experience of its instability can resist the charm.

The incompleteness of character is conspicuous in all that they do and have done; in their history, in their practical habits, in their arts and in their literature. Their lyrical melodies are exquisite, their epic poetry is ridiculous bombast. In the lives of their saints there is a wild if fantastic splendour; but they have no secular history, for as a nation they have done nothing which posterity will not be anxious to forget; and if they have never produced a tolerable drama, it is because imagination cannot outstrip reality. In the annals of ten centuries there is not a character, male or female, to be found belonging to them with sufficient firmness of texture to be carved into dramatic outline. Their temperaments are singularly impressionable, yet the impression is incapable of taking shape. They have little architecture of their own, and the forms introduced from England have been robbed of their grace. Their houses, from cabin to castle, are the most hideous in the world. No lines of beauty soften anywhere the forbidding harshness of their provincial towns; rarely does climbing rose or

creeper dress the naked walls of farmhouse or cottage. The sun never shone on a lovelier country as nature made it. They have pared its forests to the stump, till it shivers in damp and desolation. The perceptions of taste which belong to the higher orders of understanding, are as completely absent as truthfulness of spirit is absent, or cleanliness of person and habit. The Irish are the spendthrift sister of the Arian race. Yet there is notwithstanding a fascination about them in their old land and in the sad and strange associations of their singular destiny. They have a power of attraction which no one who has felt it can withstand. Brave to rashness, yet so infirm of purpose, that unless they are led by others their bravery is useless to them; patriots, yet with a history which they must trick with falsehood to render it tolerable even to themselves; imaginative and poetical, yet unable to boast of one single national work of art; attached ardently to their country, yet so cultivating it that they are the byword of Europe; they appeal to sympathy in their very weakness; and they possess and have always possessed some qualities the moral worth of which it is impossible to overestimate, and which are rare in the choicest races of mankind.

Amidst their weaknesses, their confident boastings and imperfect performances, the Irish have shown themselves at all times, and in all places, capable of the most loyal devotion to anyone who will lead and command them. They have not been specially

attached to chiefs of their own race. Wherever and in whomsoever they have found courage and capacity, they have been ready with heart and hand to give their services; and whether at home in sacrificing their lives for their chiefs, or as soldiers in the French or English armies, or as we now know them in the form of the modern police, there is no duty, however dangerous and difficult, from which they have been found to flinch, no temptation however cruel which tempts them into unfaithfulness. Loyalty of this kind, though called contemptuously a virtue of barbarism, is a virtue which, if civilization attempts to dispense with it, may cause in its absence the ruin of civilization. Of all men the most likely to appreciate it were the Norman barons; for personal fidelity of man to man lay at the heart of the feudal organization. But nevertheless in Ireland it was their temptation as well as their strength. To the Irish kern it mattered little whether his chief was a Geraldine or an O'Connor; it mattered much whether he was to be ruled under the imported laws of the stranger, or by the customs and traditions of his own people; whether when he had found a chief who would lead him to annual victory he was to be allowed to enjoy the fruits of victory in the old fashion, or was forced to be content with barren honour and the praise of his master. He would have accepted the new conditions had it been possible to enforce them for a few generations while habits of order could grow. But the times were pressing; the barons had much work to

do and few men of their own to do it with. Money was scarce with them, and rewards of other kinds were equally scarce; while plunder was easy and satisfactory, and was the time-honoured mode by which services in war were paid for. The baron and his Irish retainers found the relations between them grow easy when the customs of the country were allowed to stand; and when a Butler or a Lacy, not contented with leading his people to spoil and victory, adopted their language and their dress, and became as one of themselves, the affection of which they were the objects among the people grew at once into adoration. Then old Celtic names were dropped. The fighting men of Galway became the De Burgh's men and called themselves Burkes. In Kerry and Limerick half the inhabitants became Geraldines. The Ormond or the Desmond of the day became a kind of sovereign. He forgot more and more that he was come to Ireland to introduce English order and manners; and to strengthen his authority and conciliate his subjects, he left them to their own laws and their own ways, while they in turn became the instruments of their lord's ambition. His Norman dependents followed the example, took Irish wives, and followed Irish fashions; and if on one side, and in some places, the conquerors had introduced civilization, elsewhere they had but lent fresh strength and sinew to the very thing which they were sent to subdue.

The metamorphosis of the feudal baron into the Celtic chief was not completed without efforts from

the nobler part of the English settlers to arrest the downward progress. By the statute of Kilkenny, in 1367, it was made treason for an Englishman of birth or blood to accept or govern by the laws of the Brehons. Intermarriage with the Irish, or fostering<sup>1</sup> with the Irish, was made treason. Those who had chosen to adopt Irish manners, Irish names or language, were threatened with forfeiture. Private war between the great families had become as frequent and as scandalous as before the Conquest. Swords were forbidden to be drawn without orders from the Lord Deputy; and wardens of the peace were named for every county to see the law obeyed. The attempt to keep the races apart has lately been considered vain and impolitic; but the framers of these statutes understood the conditions more clearly than those who condemn them. The interfusion of races did not mean the elevation of the Irish to the level of their rulers, but the degradation of the ruler to the state of those whose fashions it was his business to extirpate. It meant that every separate potentate was to assume a savage independence, and, for the sake of himself and his immediate dependents, to extend and perpetuate the lawlessness which was Ireland's curse.

The Kilkenny Parliament was followed by fresh efforts on the part of England. Richard the Second appeared in person on the scene, brought the chiefs upon their knees, read Ireland the often-repeated

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<sup>1</sup> Entrusting the children to Irish foster-nurses, the most fatal of all the means by which the degeneracy was brought about.



lesson that England had but to exert herself to assert an instant and absolute supremacy. Absenteeism, the deepest root of the mischief, had already been at work. Lords and gentlemen, who retained most completely the English character, and whose presence in Ireland, therefore, was most indispensable, had learnt to prefer the society of their friends at home to the pain and trouble of coercing banditti in Donegal or Galway. They had reduced their connection with their estates to drawing rent or revenues from them; and the old families came back into their places charged with payments which on such terms were no more than robbery. Civilization was not sufficiently advanced to tolerate modern views of the rights of property. They were ordered back to their posts under pain of confiscation.

Unhappily, a cycle of civil war was opening in England itself. Richard, the slave of parasites and courtiers, was shaking on his throne. Three times he crossed to Ireland: on his last visit, in 1399, he was perhaps looking to his subjects there, as Charles the First and James the Second looked afterwards, to save him from revolution at home. He failed and fell, entailing in his overthrow a century of convulsions. The House of Lancaster, to divert attention and strengthen their imperfect titles by gratifying the national vanity, flung themselves into conquest. Had the army which conquered at Agincourt been directed upon Ireland, had the genius which for a brief interval turned France into an English province, been addressed

to the subjugation and settlement of England's own dominions, Henry the Fifth might have left a less distinguished name, but the Irish difficulty might have been for ever ended, and he would have bequeathed to his son a less fatal inheritance. But Ireland, as in a later century, was neglected as too inglorious a field for enterprise, and was left to her own will, to tear in pieces the parchment laws which there was no longer a sword to enforce. As disaster thickened in France the change in Ireland was significantly marked. So far from absenteeism being checked, the wars had recalled a yet larger number of the Norman-Irish leaders to take part in the struggle. The pretence of carrying English law through the whole country was formally abandoned. The four counties known as the English Pale<sup>1</sup> were divided from the rest of the island, where the Irish, except in the sea towns, were left to themselves. The English were required by a statute of Henry the Sixth to distinguish themselves by a difference in the beard.<sup>2</sup> Those of the natives who cared to be protected by English law were allowed to live within the frontier on condition of adopting the English characteristics. Those beyond the Pale came to be called the king's Irish enemies. The English were forbidden to hold intercourse with them, visit them, or even trade with them; and an Irishman found inside the border was liable to arrest as a spy.<sup>3</sup> Every 'liegeman' was

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<sup>1</sup> Dublin, Meath, Kildare, and Louth.    <sup>2</sup> Shaving the upper lip.

<sup>3</sup> *Irish Statutes*, 25 Hen. VI. cap. 4.

permitted to kill notorious thieves,<sup>1</sup> and received a reward from the county for each thief destroyed, which the sheriff was bound to levy. As a corollary on this statute arose the famous saying, that it was no felony to kill an Irishman. Those who formally refused submission to English law could not be allowed its protection.

Such measures were symptoms of growing weakness, and of the recovering strength of the Irish clans. The Wars of the Roses followed, and completed the collapse. England was disabled for half a century from further efforts, and the counties of the Pale followed the rest of the island. The best of the remaining English went back to give their swords to Red Rose or White, and the English interest in Ireland was reduced to the families who cared least for their old homes, and had identified themselves most completely with the land of their adoption. The O's and the Macs repossessed themselves of their old inheritances. Ulster they recovered altogether. In the south and west the Anglo-Normans held their ground, but only by having become denationalized themselves. Geraldines, Butlers, and Burkes shared the country with O'Neils, O'Donnells, O'Connors, O'Rourkes, O'Briens, and O'Sullivans, scarce distinguishable from them in habit or appearance, with no law but the

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<sup>1</sup> It was not necessary that they should be caught in the act of robbery. 'It shall be lawful to every liegeman of our sovereign lord the King—all manner notorious known thieves, *and* thieves found robbing and spoiling and breaking into houses by night or day, and thieves found in the manner—to kill them.'—28 Hen. VI. cap. 3.

Brehon. They made war on each other, marauding, burning, killing, driving each other's cattle, as if they were no better than so many robber chieftains, and owned no more obedience to England than an acknowledgment of titular authority. For the first time for three hundred years Ireland was in full and ample possession of all the privileges of home rule.<sup>1</sup>

Bosworth Field and the accession of the House of Tudor gave peace to England, and brought with it the necessity of facing the Irish problem once more. The English sovereigns, though not yet calling themselves Kings of Ireland, were *Domini*, or lords paramount there; and, having claimed supremacy over the island, were responsible to God and man for the administration of some kind of justice. The unwelcome task might still have been postponed, but the Irish lords themselves forced forward the consideration of it. They considered, as their descendants considered on the deposition of James the Second, that, though attached to the English Crown, they were not attached to England, and had a right to determine for themselves who was or was not the lawful possessor of the Irish throne. The White Rose was, on the whole, the favourite with them; and pretenders, who came to them as its representatives, were instantly made welcome. They crowned Lambert Simnel in Dublin.

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<sup>1</sup> The sea towns remained English, the magistrates seemingly having so little to do in the way of secular management, or so little care to do it, that in 1483 the mayors and bailiffs of Waterford applied for and obtained permission to go on pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella.—*Cox*, vol. i. p. 175.

When Lambert Simnel broke down, they received Perkin Warbeck, and met him in a Parliament. These phantom figures soon vanished, but their reception decided Henry the Seventh to make a resolute attempt to put the bridle once more between their teeth. An account of Ireland written at this time by an Englishman calling himself 'Panderus,' or the 'Pander,' shows with some clearness the problem to be solved.<sup>1</sup>

Half Louth, half Dublin, half Meath, and half Kildare were still nominally subject to English law; but between the extortions of the officials of the court, the subsidies paid for protection which was not furnished, and the consequent necessity of paying black mail to the chiefs of the Irish, 'the English folk' within the Pale were reckoned 'more oppressed and more miserable than any others in the whole country;' 'none in any part of the known world were so evil be seen in town and field, so brutish, so trod under foot, and with so wretched a life.' Outside these limits, the two great houses of the Geraldines in Leinster and Munster, the O'Briens in Clare, the Butlers in Kilkenny, the O'Neils and O'Donnells in the north, exercised a rude supremacy. Under their titular leadership the country was shared out between sixty Irish chiefs of the old blood and 'thirty great captains of the English noble folk,' each of whom 'lived only by the sword, and obeyed no temporal

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<sup>1</sup> The Pander's account is embodied in 'A Report on the State of Ireland in 1515,' and forms apparently the whole substance of that report.—*State Papers*, Hen. VIII. vol. ii. p. 1.

power but only himself that was strong.' These ninety leaders, on an average, commanded seven or eight hundred swords apiece; but their retainers, when their services were unrequired by the chief, were generally fighting among themselves. The captains among the Irish were chosen by 'fortmayne.' The head of the clan was he that had 'the strongest arm.' Every lad of spirit under him who could gather a score or two of followers set up for himself, seized or built some island or forest stronghold, where he lived by his right arm on the plunder of his neighbours, and fought his way to the first place under his lord.

Their private habits were wild as their occupations were lawless. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, when a distinct view of them begins to be obtainable, the cattle and human beings lived herded together in the earl of Desmond's castle. If Fynes Moryson may be believed, the daughters of distinguished Ulster chiefs squatted on the pavement round the hall fires of their fathers' castles, in the presence of strangers, as bare of clothing as if Adam had never sinned. According to Spenser, in striking contrast with the Irish of later experience, the women in all their relations were emancipated to the fullest imaginable extent; and, in Spenser's time, they had rather improved than deteriorated since the visit of the Pander. A hundred thousand families (the population did not exceed, if it reached, half a million) divided Ireland, whose ways of life, and whose notion of the

objects for which life was given them, were the ways and the notions of savages. In unconscious simplicity their historians reveal their character. The pages of the Four Masters, the 'Annals of Lough Cé,' are filled with a monotonous series of murders and destruction. Strife and bloodshed were the sole business of life; and those of them took highest rank, and rose most to favour in song and legend, who had slaughtered most enemies, and burnt and harried the largest number of homesteads. Partial exceptions there may have been. Within the walls of towns there must have been some kind of human decency. In Ormond's castle of Kilkenny, at Maynooth, and in the houses of the great barons of the Pale, the example of the English viceroy at Dublin was, perhaps, faintly imitated. Imagination may with difficulty approach, it certainly cannot exaggerate, the condition of the rest of the island.

'The holy woman Brigitta,' says the Pander emphatically, conveying under an Irish legend his general impressions as to the whole subject, 'used to enquire of her good angel many questions of secrets divine. And among others she enquired of what Crystyn lande was most sowlles damned. The Angell shewyd her a lande in the weste parte of the worlde. She inquiryd the cause whye. The Angell sayd for there is most contynuall warre, rote of hate and envye and of viceis contrarye to Charytie. And the Angell dyd shew till her the lapse of the sowlles of Crystyn folke of that lande, how they fell downe into Hell as thyk as any

haylle shewrys. And pytty thereof movied the Pander to consayn his said boke, for after his opinion thys is the lande that the Angell understode, for ther is no lande in this worlde of so long contynuall warre within hymself, nor of so greate shedding of Crystyn blode, nor of so greate rubbing, spoyling, preying, and burneing, nor of so greate wrongfull extortion continually as Ireland. Wherefore it cannot be denyed by very estymation of man, but that the Angell dyd understande the lande of Ireland.’<sup>1</sup>

What could the King do more than had been done? it was asked. The land had been conquered, and settled with English, and subjected to English laws; ‘and so did continue and prosper a hundred years and more.’ Then barbarism had come back as if it were the fatal destiny of the country. Some said that things had been never better; others, that the disorder was incurable and never could be removed. The Pander thought that an account of Ireland would be demanded by God at the King’s hands; and that, for his own soul’s sake, he must take it in hand. ‘It would be more honour to him to surrender Ireland altogether, than suffer his poorer subjects to be so cruelly oppressed by the nobles, and the nobles to be at war with themselves, shedding blood always without remedy.’ ‘The herde must render account of his folk and the king for his.’

Once more there was to be an attempt to govern;

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<sup>1</sup> ‘State of Ireland and Plan for its Reformation, 1515.’ *State Papers*, vol. ii.



but how it was to be done remained obscure as ever. The despised 'churles,' or poor tillers of the earth, were the worthiest part of the population, the worthiest and the most cruelly oppressed. The Pander's proposal was to give the churles an English training, and arm them against their lords, who would thus be compelled to respect their properties, and, for want of plunder on which to sustain their followers, would be driven, in spite of themselves, to more peaceful habits. But this was one of those paper measures so uncertain in its results; for the churles after all might turn their weapons against their patrons. It was a plan easy to recommend, but impossible to execute without a complete conquest, which Henry, shaking on his throne, was unable to undertake. His hope was still to conciliate, to reclaim by persuasion and favour the least desperate of the great Irish families, and with their assistance rule or influence the rest. The two most powerful houses of Norman descent were the Butlers and the Geraldines of Kildare. Each of them had accepted earldoms from England. They held their estates in feudal tenure, with regular descent to the eldest son; and their heirs in part or wholly were educated at the English court. The Butlers, the sole exception in Ireland, were traditionally loyal. They had little influence beyond their own principality, as having English sympathies, and were therefore less available for Henry's purpose. The Kildares, far advanced in intelligence beyond the Irish level, and better aware than their countrymen of English strength,

had played fast and loose with the English connection as the turn of events recommended, but they were ready to fall back upon it if they could be regarded as the hereditary representatives of their sovereign. Earl Gerald, after crowning Lambert Simnel, shook himself free from his falling cause; in combination with his kinsmen in Munster, he crushed the party which had declared for Perkin Warbeck and drove the new Pretender out of the kingdom. All Ireland, it was said, was not a match for the Earl of Kildare. Then, 'Let the Earl of Kildare govern all Ireland,' was the answer of Henry the Seventh. Gerald, the eldest son, was married to the King's cousin, Lady Elizabeth Grey.<sup>1</sup> The Kildares were deemed the most fit connecting links between the two islands. They undertook to keep Ireland quiet in its allegiance, and to govern, if nothing else, at least inexpensively. Prince Henry, then a child and Duke of York, was appointed viceroy, as a complimentary equivalent to the title of Prince of Wales borne by his brother. The political question raised by Simnel's coronation had to be disposed of before a final settlement. Sir Edward Poynings, sent over as Deputy, carried through the Irish Parliament the two famous acts known by his name, by which English law was constitutionally established in Ireland;<sup>2</sup> and the Irish legislature surrendered its pretence to pass measures which had

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<sup>1</sup> From this marriage came the fair Geraldine, who grew up at the English court, and with her Irish charms captivated the young Lord Surrey.

<sup>2</sup> 10 Hen. VII. cap. 22.

not been first approved in London.<sup>1</sup> This point concluded, the sword of justice was delivered over to the Kildares, and was held by them for a quarter of a century.

The establishment of the Tudor dynasty, it has been sometimes supposed, was the most favourable opportunity as yet offered for the erection of an Ireland loyal to England, yet governed by her own people according to 'Irish ideas;' and had it been tolerable for an orderly and well administered kingdom to retain a dependency at its doors abandoned wholly to those habits of lawlessness which governments exist to repress, the administration of the Geraldines might have been continued indefinitely without provoking a collision. Poyning's Acts were an unfelt restraint, when the statutes of an Irish Parliament were not even nominally in force beyond the Pale. The Kildares deriving their strength from their popularity could govern only by humouring the 'ideas,' which they were chosen to represent; and where in other countries anarchy works its own cure through the miseries which it creates, in Ireland the misery was itself enjoyment. The free right of every one to make war upon his neighbour at pleasure was the Magna Charta of Irish liberty. To sacrifice the privilege of appeal to the ordeal of battle was to sacrifice everything which made life itself worth having.<sup>2</sup> So long as

<sup>1</sup> 10 Hen. VII. cap. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 'Some sayen also that all the noble folke of the lande of Ireland, fro the highest degree to the lowest,

English or Irish, that useyth the sayde extortions hadde lever to continue the same at ther lybertye, and bere the greate daunger of Godde

England left the Irish free to plunder and kill, they were well contented that one of themselves should sit in Dublin Castle with the title of King's Vicegerent. Freedom such as Scotland fought for, the inhabitants of the sister island never sought or cared for. Conscious that they could not stand alone, they were satisfied to live under a power which left them in possession of all that they desired, without risk of interference from other countries which might perhaps prove less forbearing. If the absence of every element which in the court of reason and conscience constitute the justification for the forcible annexation of Ireland, formed a hopeful ground for the establishment of amicable relations between the two peoples, the attempt to govern by 'Irish ideas,' as exemplified in the administration of the house of Kildare, had only to have been persevered in to have brought about the desired union of heart and affections.

But England to her misfortune has never been able to persevere long in any one policy towards Ireland. She tries coercion, till impatience with the cost, and a sense of the discredit, produce a hope that coercion is

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and of their enemyes, than to have all the lande as well orderyd as England and as obedyent to Godde and to the King, if therbye they shulde lose their lybertyes in vyceis and the said extortions; for ther is no lande in all thys worlde that have more lybertye in viceis than Ireland and lesse lybertye in vertue; for every greate captayne within

his rome holdeyth by the sworde imperyall jurydyction at his lybertye that nature most desyre; which he shulde lose for ever if the lande were orderyd and be at lybertye in vertue; that is to be obedyent to the Kynges laws and to the Holye Church.—'State of Ireland and Plan for its Reformation.' *State Papers*, Hen. VIII. vol. ii. p. 16.

no longer needed, or a belief that it has been a mistake from the beginning. Conciliation follows, and compromise, and concession, and apology. The strain is taken off, the anarchy revives, and again with monotonous uniformity there is a fresh appeal to the sword. The ignominy of having a country nominally subject to him, where the first elements of social order had yet to be introduced, forced itself slowly and with difficulty into the mind of Henry the Eighth. No one knew better than he that order was a plant of slow growth, that bad habits were a second nature, to be changed only by time and forbearance. 'Realms, nevertheless, without justice,' he said, 'were but tyrannies and robberies more consonant to beastly appetites than the laudable life of reasonable creatures. Where wilfulness did reign without law or justice, there was no distinction of property: no man might say this is mine; but by strength the weaker was oppressed.'<sup>1</sup> Henry did not insist that the Irish, ill-trained as they had been, should submit at once to English law; but he held it necessary 'that they should conform their order of living to the observance of some reasonable law, and not live at will as they had been used.' He, like his father, was willing to try peaceful means, but means which would lead to a result with a defined purpose of improvement. He disavowed — and in perfect sincerity, for throughout all his troubled relations with Ireland he acted consistently on the same

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<sup>1</sup> 'Henry VIII. to the Earl of Surrey, 1520.' *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 52.

principle—he disavowed all intentions of depriving the chiefs of their lands, or confiscating their rights for the benefit of Englishmen. He desired to persuade them to exchange their system of election for a feudal tenure, to acknowledge by a formal act of surrender that they held their lordships under the crown, receiving them again with English titles, and with legitimate jurisdiction derived from the King. Under this condition, instead of being Irish enemies, they would become subjects entrusted with formal authority; and in return might retain and administer the more tolerable of their own Brehon laws, till a more settled life brought a desire with it for the English common law. The worst and weakest code ever digested into authoritative form would at least be better than no law at all.

A people who could understand an appeal of this kind would perhaps have never required to be so addressed. As spoken to Ireland it was like an invitation to water to become, of its own free will, solid land, or to a sandy wilderness to clothe itself with corn. It is well that so clear an answer remains on record to the stereotyped slander, that England's only object in her management or mismanagement of that unhappy country, was to rob the ancient owners of the land of their fathers. Yet the failure was inevitable, and would have been followed at all events by rougher measures, even without the new element of discord which was flung out into Europe, and among its other results gave coherence and defined form to Irish disaffection.

## SECTION V.

ON the rupture of England with the Papacy, the Irish, by immediate instinct, threw themselves on the Roman side. Could they have found Protestant allies within reach, and had Henry continued in deed as well as in name Defender of the Catholic faith, the Church of Ireland might perhaps have remembered and reclaimed her ancient liberties, have dated her slavery from the grant of Adrian, and have fought for independence under the name of spiritual freedom. The Celts of Wales and Cornwall are vehemently Protestant; the Irish themselves lose their Papal fervour when settled in countries where Popery is no longer identical with patriotism; and their tendency in all England's quarrels to take the opposite side might have reminded them that it was England which first riveted the Roman yoke upon their necks.

England, however, shook off the 'Italian Priest,' and declared herself competent to decide her own causes ecclesiastical and civil within her own borders. The Irish, already uneasy at Henry's attempts to meddle with them, declared themselves champions of the true faith. The Pope claimed the right to absolve them from their allegiance; and rebellion became thus a second duty. The first results were not encouraging to the new ideas of patriotism. The trusted and favoured house of Kildare put themselves forward as

champions of the Catholic faith. The Earl, who was in London, was thrown instantly into the Tower, where he died. Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, his eldest son, who at first carried all before him, was compelled, after half a year of triumph, to surrender with his uncles, and was hanged at Tyburn. Failure so absolute daunted for awhile the insurrectionary spirit, and through the King's adroitness and forbearance it seemed doubtful whether it would revive. The Kildare Geraldines were attainted, but their estates were left untouched, to be restored as the return of their loyalty. Few if any of the confederates were punished with loss of lands. There were confiscations, but confiscations of the estates not of the Irish but of the English absentees. Those of the colonists who were unable, or who neglected, to discharge the duties attaching to their places, were declared to have forfeited their tenures. English noblemen who held lands in Ireland were required to reside and maintain them. The rights of property were made stringently conditional as the fulfilment of its obligations.<sup>1</sup> Justice so far was even-handed, and justice being a rare virtue in that country never failed to be appreciated.

A measure followed which, from another side, produced a favourable effect on the Irish leaders. The abbeys in Ireland as well as England were suppressed so far as an act of Parliament could suppress them.<sup>2</sup> The estates of the Church were passed on easy terms

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<sup>1</sup> Act of Absentees, 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 3. *Irish Statutes.*

<sup>2</sup> 33 Hen. VIII. cap. 5.



to the great persons in the different provinces, as a bribe to purchase their assistance in carrying out the statute. Superstition or piety in some places forbade the sacrilege; in others conscience was too weak to resist temptation. The chiefs and nobles having consented to a share in the spoils, forgave the spoiler; and the first singular results of this violent and seemingly dangerous act were the acquiescence of the O'Neills, O'Briens, and MacCarties, in the plans of Henry for a change in their mode of tenure. They surrendered their lands, to take them back again subject to English conditions and to the English rule of inheritance. They accepted earldoms in the place of their Irish chieftaincies, and attended in their robes at a Parliament in Dublin; while Henry himself, seemingly with universal consent, took the title of King of Ireland, when before he had been but Dominus, or Lord.

The beginnings of a new order of things were happily laid, and there had never, since the Conquest, been better promises of peace. As usual, when England showed strength and resolution, Ireland became immediately submissive. If Henry had lived a few more years, and if the quarrel with the Pope had not been further complicated by differences of doctrine, the emphatic success of an authoritative policy at a critical time might have spared the need of future outlawries, spoliations, and insurrections.

## SECTION VI.

THE short and unhappy reign of Edward the Sixth produced less agitation in Ireland than might have been anticipated. Attempts were ventured to introduce and force upon the people the doctrinal theories for which even England was unprepared. Evangelical Protestantism of a serious kind was really and truly better fitted to make its way among an impressionable people like the Irish than the ambiguous formulas of the Anglican Church; but spiritual conversion was too tedious a process for the impatient precipitancy of the advanced Reformers. Prelates were thrust into the Irish sees under the naked authority of letters patent. John Bale, the most virulent and the most profane of the unfortunate party whose excesses provoked the counter reformation, commenced work as Bishop of Ossory, which would have led, under ordinary circumstances, to an instant explosion. In Ossory, the Bishop was under the exceptional protection of Lord Ormond, who was himself a protestant; the Irish leaders were as yet apparently uncertain whether to accept finally the bribe of the Church lands; and the secular government was in the hands of Sir Edward Bellingham, one of the ablest viceroys who ever wielded the Irish sword. But the exasperation which would have soon burst into rebellion rendered easy and complete the counter-

revolution under Edward's successor. On the marriage of Philip and Mary, and the formation of the close alliance with Spain, religion was no longer a cause of difference. The friars were reinstated in the religious houses, and the English Church and the Catholic clergy worked hand in hand for the restoration of order.

The two countries, notwithstanding, were no nearer than before to a real union. No sooner was the quarrel of the creeds suspended, than the old grounds of jealousy revived; and Mary, before she died, found herself at issue with the most powerful chief of the native race on questions of jurisdiction and inheritance. Con O'Neill had accepted the earldom of Tyrone from Henry the Eighth, with reversion to his eldest legitimate son. The amours of Con had been miscellaneous. His children irregularly begotten were numerous. The custom of the tribe on the death of a chief had been to choose in his place the bravest and the strongest. The Baron of Dungannon, the lawful heir under the patent of the earldom, was inefficient and unpopular. His bastard brother, Shan or John, a model Irishman, fierce, brave, and unscrupulous, the idol of the clan, was elected by acclamation, not to the English title, which he despised, but to the name and place of the O'Neill. The Baron of Dungannon was murdered; Shan O'Neill emerged for a brief period of splendour into the championship of Irish liberty, and prepared, Church or no Church, to vindicate the right of his people to manage their affairs and elect

their rulers on their own principles. In the settlement of this dispute the life or death of Mary would have made no difference; and if Ireland was to be reclaimed to civilization, a reconquest would have been equally a necessity, though the Reformation had been no more heard of, and England had continued thenceforward a loyal vassal of the Holy See. But Mary went the way of her brother; Elizabeth succeeded; and with Elizabeth came the beginning of modern Irish history.

## SECTION VII.

THE revolution on the death of Queen Mary re-established in England the supremacy of the Crown, the Act of Uniformity, and the Reformed Prayer Book. The majority even of the English were still Catholics; yet the change, if largely unwelcome to them, was received without surprise. In the theory of the constitution the law which undertook the direction of conduct extended to the exercise of religion. Opinion remained free; there was no inquisition into the conscience; but public worship was a formal act which, by universal consent, the Crown and Parliament were held to have a right to control. The experience of three hundred years has taught us that the widest divergence of belief is compatible with equal purity of life and equal fidelity to a common government. But the conditions did not exist which make toleration possible at a time when, though differing infinitely in the articles of faith, all parties were nevertheless agreed that heresy was the darkest of crimes, that to hold the right faith was the first of duties, and that the business of the civil magistrate was not only to execute justice but to maintain truth. When feeling was thus intense, and the conscience so keenly excited, to have allowed the public and avowed exercise of more than one religion would have led inevitably to acts of violence. If the law had been silent, the

several congregations as they were gathered under their preachers into organized bodies would have themselves attempted to give expression to the universal sentiment; and so unanimous was the conviction that the State could allow but one religion, that the aspirations of the English Catholics were less directed towards toleration and free chapels and churches, which they would have counted it an impiety to concede to their adversaries, than to a counter-revolution, which would replace the exclusive authority in their own hands.

The Catholics, by the necessity of their situation, made themselves liable to additional disabilities. So long as the Pope claimed a right to absolve them from their allegiance, and they on their part refused to repudiate his pretensions, they could neither be, nor be considered, loyal subjects of an excommunicated sovereign. To be a good Catholic was, in the nature of things, to be unfaithful to the secular prince. All Protestant governments were obliged to regard the adherents of the Roman see as secret enemies; and although practice was not governed by logic, and English gentlemen contrived subterfuges by which to reconcile incompatible obligations, Elizabeth's government, when she had decided to go forward with the Reformation, was compelled to watch them with distrust.

At first there was the utmost forbearance. The Act of Uniformity was the public law of the land; fines were attached to non-attendance at church; an

oath of allegiance, excluding and denying the pretended rights of the Pope, was made a condition of holding office under the Crown, of admission to the Universities, or of the exercise of a learned profession. But mass was said by connivance in private houses. The allegiance of the peers was assumed as not needing to be confirmed by protestations. The fines were not exacted. The widest toleration was permitted consistent with the existence of the law. With some it answered, with others it failed. The passionate Papists murmured, conspired, fell into treason. Their leaders were executed. The laws were enforced more stringently. They conspired again, and invited help from Spain. The nation, whose patriotism was stronger than their superstition, stood by the Crown. The cause of independence triumphed, and the Pope's authority in England died utterly away.

The state of Ireland was materially different. In England, at Elizabeth's accession, though the Protestants were a minority, they were the most energetic and vigorous of the population. In Ireland, 'of the birth of the land,' there were no Protestants at all. Yet the difficulty of adopting a separate principle of government was enormous. Although there was no legislative union, yet laws of Imperial consequence, which had been passed in England, were re-enacted as a matter of course by the Irish Parliament. The Ireland of the Statute Book was still only the Pale and the port towns, and though even within these narrow limits Protestantism had as yet made no

progress, yet the need of defence against the Pope was even greater there than at home. The Act of Uniformity, therefore, and the Act of Supremacy were pushed, by some means or other, upon the Irish Statute Book. The Bishops of the Pale who refused the oath of allegiance were deprived, and others instituted in their places. The sees in the rest of the island were filled up when they fell vacant, only as the Government found itself strong enough to maintain Protestants there without danger of their being murdered. Meanwhile the private toleration allowed in England received in Ireland a far larger latitude. The Primate was a Protestant. In the Parish churches in the Pale there was either a Protestant service or none. But when over-zealous Deputies showed a disposition to proselytize, they were invariably checked by the Queen; and the policy which was succeeding in England, it was supposed, not wholly without reason, might produce analogous effects in the sister country. The Prayer Book especially, when translated into Latin, retained a Catholic complexion. The King of Spain long turned a deaf ear to invitations from the Irish leaders to interfere. If in Ireland, to begin with, there were scarcely any Protestants at all, in England they were in a minority of one to five or six,<sup>1</sup> and were almost limited to London and the large towns.

One difference was overlooked, and that a vital one. In England, when her independence was threatened

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<sup>1</sup> The highest estimate was one in three. The lowest, in the Catholic representations to Philip, made them but one in twelve.



by the Catholic powers, the national spirit was on the side of the Reformation. In Ireland, zeal for religion identified itself with political freedom; and the more ardent the orthodoxy, the greater the prospect of obtaining sympathy and help from Spain and Italy and France. Elizabeth, perhaps, considered that the Catholic powers had work enough on their own hands; that, if the magistracy, the public offices, and the learned profession were kept strictly in the hands of conformists, the Pale would become gradually reconciled, and, with time and forbearance, the rest of the island would follow. The calculation was utterly disappointed; the Queen's meaning towards Ireland was nothing but good; she detested persecution, she was scrupulously anxious, like her father, to protect the Irish owners in possession of their estates; yet she pursued a policy the most fertile in disaster that the most malignant ingenuity could have devised. The problem presented to her was, doubtless, complicated. To have left religion alone and contented herself with the secular government, would have been equivalent to a declaration that there should be no Protestants in Ireland at all; it would have furnished an unanswerable argument for indulgence to her Catholic subjects at home; while the Irish, from the nature of the case, would have been in league with all her enemies within the realm and without. To harmonize the laws of the two countries was a political necessity; but, if the Queen found herself compelled to establish a Church which should be independent of the See of Rome, her

obvious duty was to secure the presence of a Protestant community by a second influx of colonists, who would be protected by the difference of creed from the seductive influences which had proved so fatal to the descendants of the Normans. The Church property of the Pale, the lands of the abbeys, which were again suppressed, the estates attached to the bishops' sees, had all of them lapsed to the Crown. There was land enough, without dispossessing a single lay proprietor, to have settled colonies of Protestants throughout Dublin, Meath, and Kildare, who would have given strength to the English interest, supported clergy, and at least have shown the Irish people that, to be a Protestant, was not to be an atheist. Elizabeth, unfortunately, not choosing to have a war of creeds in Ireland, preferred to postpone the introduction of the Protestant religion to a more convenient season. Irritated with the expenses of the government, she farmed the Church lands, farmed even the benefices themselves, squeezing out of them some miserable dribblet of revenue; and gradually, as the English power extended, applied the same method in the other provinces. The priests withdrew from the churches to the hill sides, or to the chiefs' castles. No ministers took their places when there were neither houses for them to live in, nor parishioners to protect them from murder. Roofs and windows fell in, doors were broken from their hinges, till at last there was neither church nor chapel through which rain and wind had not a free sweep; while grooms and horseboys

pattered through some mockery of a ritual at a beggar's stipend.

It may be answered that all this was inevitable. The priests made themselves apostles of insurrection, and the life of a Protestant minister would not have been worth a day's purchase. But Protestant colonies could have maintained themselves with ease in the Pale. So feeble for many years were the resources of Irish insurrection, and so divided were the chiefs among themselves, that a mere handful of English soldiers were able, not, indeed, to keep order, but to shatter any rebellion which assumed an organized form. Had the Church lands been everywhere resolutely taken possession of and distributed among English families who would have undertaken to defend them, and had four thousand soldiers been dispersed in strong positions through the four provinces, with wages regularly paid, the savage spirit of resistance, which ultimately became so formidable, would never have been able to grow; and the frightful catalogue of crimes which provoked, and in some degree excused, that resistance, would never have been committed. Elizabeth's soldiers, with their pay for ever in arrears, and not choosing to starve, lived almost universally on plunder. Placed in the country to repress banditti, they were little better than banditti themselves. Their scanty numbers were a temptation to disturbance. Too few to be able to take prisoners or hold a mutinous district in compelled quiet, their only resource was to strike terror by cruelty. When

sent to recover stolen cattle, or punish a night foray, they came at last to regard the Irish peasants as unpossessed of the common rights of human beings, and shot and strangled them like foxes or jackals. More than once in the reports of officers employed on these services we meet the sickening details of these performances related with a calmness more frightful than the atrocities themselves; young English gentlemen describing expeditions into the mountains 'to have some killing,' as if a forest was being driven for a battue.

Every crime is entered in the register of nature. Expiation sooner or later is demanded with mathematical certainty, and, three-quarters of a century later, the bill was presented, to be paid with interest. Meanwhile, neither the faults of particular soldiers, nor the negligence of Queen Elizabeth, could alter the essential nature of facts. The worst cruelties of the garrisons were but the occasional copies of the treatment of the Irish by one another. The best and only hope for the country was the extension of English influence over it, and by the necessity of things that influence continued to grow. Gladly would Elizabeth have let Ireland alone if the Pale would have been decently obedient, and the chiefs have remained at peace with her and with each other. It could not be. They identified the wrongs of Ireland with the wrongs of Holy Church; they made themselves soldiers of the Pope; they threw themselves on the support of Philip the Second; and the Queen was driven, in

spite of herself, to encounter them one after another, and force them to acknowledge her authority.

Shan O'Neill was the first to try conclusions with her. Shan, having established himself in his own rights, proceeded to claim sovereignty over Ulster. He crushed the smaller chiefs; he crushed the O'Donnells; he corresponded with the French King. He aspired to be the liberator of Ireland, and to assume on Tara Hill the crown of his ancestors. Elizabeth, after trying in vain the eternal policy of concession and temporizing, varied with treachery and an attempt at assassination, was at last forced into characteristic activity. She did not conquer Ulster, but she bribed the inferior tribes to rise against the O'Neills. She assisted the O'Donnells. She made use of a piratical colony of Scots, who had settled in Antrim, whom Shan had injured. Sir Henry Sidney ravaged Tyrone, and fixed a garrison in Derry. Shan's enemies closed round him, and he was murdered. The immediate danger was over; but the essential mischief, the anarchy and turbulence of the clans had been fostered and fed in the process.

The South rose next, and the same plan was followed. The house of Desmond and the house of Ormond were hereditary foes for generations. Munster had been distracted by their quarrels. Sir Henry Sidney while viceroy had insisted that Munster must be made a presidency, and that both factions must be forced into obedience to law. A presidency would cost money; Elizabeth preferred so to manage the

rival noblemen that they should be a check upon each other, while both should depend upon herself. She was sure of Ormond, for Ormond was a Protestant. She insisted that her viceroy should take Ormond's side in the quarrel between the two houses, whether Ormond was right or wrong. Injustice and favouritism never produced good fruit in Ireland. The Geraldines were ardent Catholics. They had held aloof from Shan O'Neill; they had no mind to build a throne for a native Irish chief; but they were none the less determined to resist the encroachments of Protestantism and England. The Earl of Desmond, who had avoided compromising himself, was summoned to London to explain suspicious features in his conduct. He obeyed and was imprisoned. His heir was born while he was in England. Leaving this precious hostage for his good behaviour, he was released, was again arrested in Dublin, escaped, and was then allowed to remain among his own people, because it was dangerous to pursue him; and the fatal lesson was taught, that the English Government could be defied with impunity.

Disgust with Irish anarchy had led to the discussion of projects for the resettlement of the South by English undertakers. The country had been mapped out. Volunteers came forward who offered, in exchange for lands, to bear the cost of military occupation. Elizabeth listened coldly. Cecil said, in answer to their petitions, that lands could not be escheated till the owners had forfeited them by treason. But the

abortive scheme of the Earl of Essex to form a colony in Ulster coupled with the revival of claims on estates in Cork under Norman charters, long neglected and forgotten, worked on the Irish susceptibilities. The expectation that the attempt would be renewed hung like a standing menace over an excited and agitated race, who believed that England was watching for an opportunity to sweep them out and destroy them.

The fanaticism of a few English divinity students who had seceded to the Church of Rome, fired the mine which lay ready to explode. The celebrated Nicholas Sanders, after libelling, as only an English pervert could libel, the Reformation of his own country, became a missionary agitator for a Catholic crusade. He found Philip cold, but he wrought with more success on the inflated imagination of the Pope; and, having fallen in with an exiled Geraldine, who assured him that if the Pope would speak the word all Ireland would rise in enthusiasm, he procured a commission thither as legate for the Holy See. He obtained money and arms, collected a few hundred Italian and Spanish volunteers, and landed on the coast of Kerry. He learnt, as many others have had to learn, that there were two Irelands—the Ireland of imagination—the Ireland of eloquence and enthusiasm—and the Ireland of fact and performance. Long before, had there been any real genuine national spirit in the Irish race, the pitiful handful of English would have been pushed into the sea with all the ease that Sanders counted on. But in Ireland, behind the most

fervid language, there lay always a cool calculation of interest. When an Irish leader committed himself to rebellion, his neighbours had their reasons for hanging back and making a merit of their fidelity to England. The Geraldines had held aloof from the O'Neills; the O'Neills and the O'Briens declined to help the Geraldines; and the Butlers had their old grudge, which the time was come at last to repay. The Earl of Desmond himself, contented with passive defiance and the partial sovereignty of the southwestern counties, shrunk as long as he could from the war to the knife to which the Anglo-Papal firebrand was committing him. It was found necessary to force his hand by the murder of an English officer, who was his cousin's guest at Tralee, a crime for which he knew that there would be no forgiveness.

Then at last, desperate of other remedy, the Earl of Desmond rose. The Geraldine clan gathered to his side in the passionate personal fidelity which is the noblest feature of the Irish character; and Limerick, Kerry, Cork, and part of Waterford, assisted afterwards by some of the Barons of the Pale, entered into a struggle for life and death with all the power of Elizabeth. A rebellion so begun, and with such objects, she well understood that for her own safety she must trample out. She could not afford to leave the Papal banner flying on any spot in her dominions. Troops were sent over. A fleet came round to the western coast. Lord Grey, the Viceroy, by a rapid march to Dingle, blocked the Italian troops into a



fort from which there was no escape, bombarded it, and destroyed them to a man. But the Queen was not content to do the work alone. Against the Irish fighting on their own soil, among bogs, and mountains, and forests, other allies were more efficient than English soldiers. The Butlers were let loose on their ancient enemies. Every living thing was destroyed by which the insurrection could maintain itself. The corn was burnt in the field; the cattle were driven into the camp and slaughtered. The men who could bear arms were out with their chief; the aged and the sick, the women and the little ones perished all in the flames of their burning homes. The official records of this deadly war return the killed and hanged in tens of thousands, and famine took up the work where neither sword nor rope could reach. Finally, when of the proud clan of the southern Geraldines there were none left but a few scattered and desperate bands, the last weapon was produced, which never failed to operate. Pardon and reward were offered to those who would kill their comrades, and the bloody heads of noted leaders were brought in by sacksful to be paid for in land or money. The legate, hunted like a wolf, died wretchedly in a forest shanty. Desmond himself, after three years of outlaw life, was betrayed by his own people; he was stabbed in his bed, and his head was set on a spike on London Bridge; while so utterly desolated was Munster, that the lowing of a cow, or the sound of a ploughboy's whistle, was not to be heard from Valentia to the Rock of Cashel. Now

would have been the time to have settled Munster effectively and for ever. Half a million of fertile acres were escheated to the crown. They were granted away among Elizabeth's favourites as a reward for service, or among undertakers who were allowed at last to carry out their project of occupation. But the colonization was irregular, unsystematic, and imperfect. The essential condition of residence, without which confiscation was useless robbery, was evaded in act, if insisted on in words; and the change over part at least of the forfeited territory did little more than create a fresh poisonous batch of absentee proprietors, while the lands were still occupied by an Irish tenantry, who waited for and in due time found their opportunity for revenge.

For the moment, however, rebellion was beaten down, and the insurgent spirit had to pause and recover itself from the frightful chastisement which had been inflicted on it. In the Pale, where Desmond had found active sympathy, an extensive revolt had been planned; but it broke out prematurely. A few of the leaders fled; others were taken, tried, and executed. Connaught, after a severe discipline from Sir Nicholas Malby, was overawed into outward quiet by a garrison at Athlone. Ulster, the most Irish of the four provinces, and very far the strongest, remained with its resources still unbroken. Tirlogh O'Neill, who succeeded Shan, had the prudence to avoid violent collision with the English, so long as he was left uninterfered with. The experience of the

Desmond rebellion was an appalling proof of what the English could do if provoked to extremity, while the cost of suppressing that rebellion made Elizabeth more than ever reluctant to provoke another.

Yet it was inevitable that English law and English authority must make their way throughout the island, and that Ulster's turn must come at last. Eleven years of quiet followed, and the fire broke out once more.

The defeat of the Armada, the English invasion of Spain and Portugal, and the support which Elizabeth was driven at last to extend to the United Provinces, induced Philip, who had hitherto turned a deaf ear to Irish overtures, to think more seriously of the opportunities for revenge which Ireland seemed to offer. The stupid ferocity with which the Western Irish had robbed and murdered the crews of the wrecked galleons of the Armada, left a painful impression of the character of his intended allies. A few fortunate cast-aways, however, who had been entertained kindly in the North, reported more favourably. The success of Elizabeth's government generally, the hopelessness of a Catholic revolution in England—to which they had long looked for deliverance—and the increasing strength of the Protestant party in Europe, had created a fear in the Irish Catholic gentlemen, that the forbearance with which their religious scruples had been hitherto treated might not be of long continuance. Virtually they had enjoyed full religious liberty; but, with every conquest made by England, the limits

were extended within which the country fell under the statute law. Unless they could secure their rights by formal concession, they might discover that the law would be made a reality. Every Catholic in the country was thus ready to join in a demand for the free exercise of their religion; and if their request was refused, and if Spain would help them, to redeem the errors which they had made in leaving Desmond unsupported.

The force of circumstances had carried Ireland forward, in spite of herself, in the general stream of civilization. Her bishops and clergy had been educated in Italy, in France. Many of her gentlemen had served in the French and Spanish armies. Some had taken degrees at Oxford and Cambridge. Some had been at the Inns of Court in London. They had thus grown capable of more comprehensive political views, and of larger and better considered combinations. In Hugh O'Neil, Earl of Tyrone, Elizabeth was now to find the most formidable Irish antagonist which either she or her predecessors had encountered. To her he was indebted for life, rank, and fortune. He was the son of the Baron of Dungannon, whom Shan had murdered, and the grandson of the first Earl Con. Beyond doubt, he would have shared his father's fate, had he not been sent to England, and thus taken care of. He was brought up at the Court as a Protestant, in the midst of the most brilliant circle which any capital in Europe could show. No pains were spared to make him a fit instrument for

the reclamation of his country; and when of age, he received the patents of his grandfather's earldom, and returned to Ireland. The wolf which is treated as a dog remains a wolf still. O'Neil bound himself to permit neither monk nor priest within his jurisdiction who would not conform to the Established religion.<sup>1</sup> He became himself a Catholic.<sup>2</sup> He promised to introduce English law, to abolish the Irish customs among his subjects, conform himself to English rule and order. He assumed the title of 'the O'Neil,' as the symbol of the Irish independent sovereignty, and he adopted the customs which he had forsworn. He asserted and enforced his authority over the inferior chiefs, and Elizabeth discovered that she had nurtured him, armed him with intelligence, and restored him to his rank and his estates only that he might be the better able to defy her. He became not only the unruly Irish chief, but a skilful and dangerous conspirator; and while he was protesting against being misunderstood, and affecting to desire to recover the Queen's favour, letters were intercepted from him to Philip, and to other Spanish nobles, entreating assistance for the defence of the Catholic Church.<sup>3</sup> He still pretended to be ready to submit, and the Queen was willing to pardon him; Lord Burghley, to escape the expenses and dangers of

<sup>1</sup> 'Articles agreed on by the Earl of Tyrone. June 17, 1590.'—*Calendar, Carew MSS.* p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Earl of Tyrone and Hugh O'Donnell to the King of Spain, &c. September, 1595.'—*Calendar, Carew MSS.* p. 122.

another rebellion, advised that the terms of his forgiveness should be made as easy as the State could grant; but O'Neil proposed rather to prescribe conditions than receive them. He required the dismissal out of almost the whole of Ulster of every English soldier, sheriff, magistrate, or other officer whose business was to set in action English law; he demanded further, free liberty of conscience, by which he meant free liberty of religious worship throughout Ireland,<sup>1</sup> and the restoration of the Church lands to the Catholics.

The commissioners appointed by the Queen to treat with him—so earnest were they to come to an arrangement—replied that, 'as her majesty had hitherto given full toleration without punishment of any, in all likelihood she would continue the same.' It was likely, also, she would let O'Neil have the spiritual lands. The Queen herself, when she learnt what had been offered in her name, repudiated so gross an engagement. She had acted mercifully, she said, but she could never listen to the request of a subject for permission to break the law. She declared herself 'highly offended with his petition,' and required that it should be withdrawn. O'Neil affected to comply. He said he would submit in everything to the Queen's wishes. He trusted only that she would not insist on his expelling Catholic priests who might come into Tyrone. This the Queen did not require. She had

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<sup>1</sup> 'Demands made by Tyrone, O'Donnell, and others, January 19, 1596.'—*Ibid.* p. 133; and see p. 147.

‘determined,’ she said, ‘on a course of pacification.’ She pardoned O’Neil and O’Donnell, and all their confederates,<sup>1</sup> and she appointed a fresh commission to make general enquiries into the condition of the Government of Ireland, and redress whatever might be found amiss. No sovereign could have shown more forbearance, or a more anxious desire to avoid extremities. But O’Neil’s submission was affectation merely. He had made up his mind to try the religious question with the sword, and the ink was scarcely dry upon his promise to be a good subject, before he had sent a circular round to the Irish of Munster, inviting them to join in a confederacy for the defence of ‘Christ’s Catholic religion.’<sup>1</sup>

The war which followed lasted for six years. The whole country was filled with blood and fury. O’Neil showed high qualities both as a commander and as a politician. He held the Irish together more successfully than any insurgent leader had succeeded in doing before him; and his career is unstained with personal crimes and atrocities. He destroyed an English army at the ford of the Blackwater. The Earl of Essex was sent over with the largest English force which had ever been seen in Ireland. Essex, who perhaps was already meditating treason, wasted his means and his opportunities in an expedition into Munster, where his presence was useless. When he moved at last against Tyrone, it was with reduced numbers, which

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The Queen to Lord Deputy Russell, May 25, 1596.’—*Calendar, Carew MSS.* p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> July 6, 1596. *Ibid.* p. 179.

was his excuse for producing no results. He had known O'Neil personally in England. Instead of meeting him in the field, he had a private interview with him, at which no third person was present. He agreed to a cessation of arms, left the Irish unharmed, and returned, without orders, to Elizabeth, to disgrace, conspiracy, and the scaffold.

Lord Mountjoy took his place in Ireland, and the conduct of a war that had been too long trifled with was at length in efficient hands. The negotiations of the Irish with Spain ripened into fruit. In September, 1601, Don Juan de Aguila landed at Kinsale with a Spanish army 4000 strong. Mountjoy hurried down with all the troops that he could collect, and drove Don Juan within the lines of the town. O'Neil, rallying the scattered Irish, came in haste to his relief, but was utterly and ruinously defeated; Don Juan surrendered, and reembarked, glad on any terms to be quit of service among allies so feeble in the field; and gradually smouldering in scattered fires, which one by one were trampled out, the rebellion burnt down and was extinguished. A Nuncio came from Rome to stimulate the failing energies of the rebel leaders. No Catholic, it was solemnly proclaimed, could, without sin, submit to a heretic sovereign, far less take part against the faithful who were in arms for Holy Church. This miserable doctrine, which was the root and foundation of all Ireland's woes, which made toleration impossible, and compelled the maintenance of laws which in turn provoked insurrection,



continued to work among the people, and had yet to issue in fresh and terrible consequences. But for this time O'Neil's insurrection had spent its force. The country was so dreadfully wasted that children were killed and eaten for food. In one place three wretched little creatures were found feeding on their dead mother. The horrors of such scenes were too powerful for the apostolic exhortation. The Nuncio was killed in a skirmish. Hugh O'Donnell, who had gone to Spain for fresh help, died at the castle of Simancas, possibly by poison.<sup>1</sup> Fanaticism could do no more; and, at the end of 1602, the last rebel laid down his arms.

The sufferings inflicted by the war had been so dreadful that there was no further punishment, and the bloody scenes of the Geraldine conquest were not renewed. As the chiefs submitted they were received to mercy. O'Neil himself was left in the enjoyment of his earldom; few forfeitures were exacted anywhere; and the lands which had fallen to the crown from outlawed leaders killed in battle, were made the rewards of such of the Irish as had done service to the crown.

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<sup>1</sup> In the desperation of such scenes as were witnessed daily in an Irish rebellion, any means seem lawful which may help to end them. On October 9, 1602, Sir George Carew writes to Lord Mountjoy:—'O'Donnell is dead. The merchant that bringeth me the news I do trust; and I do think it will fall out that he is poisoned by James Blake, of whom your lordship hath been formerly acquainted. At his coming into Spain he was suspected by O'Donnell, because he embarked at Cork; but afterwards he insinuated his access, and O'Donnell is dead. He never told the President in what manner he would kill him, but did assure him it should be effected.'—*Calendar*, 1602, pp. 350, 351.

The re-establishment by law of the Catholic Church of Ireland, which had been the object of the insurrection, was once more rendered impossible. If the popes would have renounced their pretensions to control the allegiance of Catholic subjects—if the Catholics themselves would have *bonâ fide* and by some formal act acknowledged that they did not recognize any right in the Pope to interfere between them and their sovereign, their claims for toleration, notwithstanding abstract theories of the duties of the State, neither could nor would have been long resisted. A right which was steadily refused by themselves to members of a different communion in countries where the power was in their hands, would have been extended with only too much readiness to them by every Protestant government in Europe. Another century of fighting, however, was still necessary, before the bishops of Rome could learn that they were no longer sovereigns over the human conscience; and no Protestant state could recognize, without self-condemnation, the exercise of a religion among its subjects which elevates rebellion into a duty.

If the Catholics suffered under disabilities they were themselves to blame. The four provinces of Ireland had risen successively against England and the Reformation, and had been one by one defeated. At last, they had risen all together. They had been supported by the Catholic Powers as they desired, and they had again failed. Two at least of these

rebellions, and those the worst and the last, need never have arisen under a wise government. They were the fruits of the injudicious economy which left the country inadequately garrisoned at a time when the religious passions had not yet assumed their virulent form; and of the neglect of the obvious duties which a conquering power owes always to the people subjected to it, and owes most of all at a crisis so serious. The smallest evil of insurrections is their immediate danger. Revolts are rarely without provocations, which in later ages excuse them, and ennoble them; and their suppression in blood leaves a legacy of hate which centuries fail to efface. Yet, after all, the battle had been fought and England had proved the stronger; and the Queen might now, had she so pleased, have insisted on a universal confiscation, or made a profession of Protestantism a condition on which land might be held in fee. The estates of those who had been in rebellion, or had refused conformity, might have been granted to Englishman or Scot, or to any other of the Reformed creed, whose allegiance could be depended on; and though it might have been hard measure, it would have been in strict conformity with the usage and example of the Catholics themselves.

Once more it was decided to try a gentler method—to insist only on the abolition of the traditionary tribal rights which bred perennial anarchy; to leave the Catholics in possession of their estates; to make no curious enquiry into their creed; to let them be

sheriffs and magistrates; to allow them seats in Parliament, and the same private toleration of their religion which all along they had enjoyed. It was hoped that they would recognize and respect the leniency of their treatment, and that the further assimilation of Ireland to English ways and character might be left to the gradual action of time.

Experience was to show that the Irish did not understand forbearance, that they interpreted lenity into fear, and respected only an authority which they dared not trifle with.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE INSURRECTION OF 1641.

#### SECTION I.

THE accession of James was looked forward to by the Catholics of both England and Ireland as the period of their suffering. So long as the English Jezebel lived the son of Mary Stuart was supposed to have concealed his true feelings. When her death set him free he was expected to declare himself a member of the Roman communion. The disappointment in England took the form of the Gunpowder conspiracy. In Ireland the corporations of Cork, Limerick, and Waterford announced that they were unable to allow the proclamation of a heretic sovereign. They ensconced themselves behind a supposed decree of the universities of Salamanca and Valladolid; and it seemed at first as if a general rebellion would again burst out. Waste, bloodshed, and misery had no terrors for a population who for centuries, of their own free choice, had lived in chronic war, and deliberately preferred it to a state of peace. To rise

against England was a game in which success was always possible, and defeat had no perils, for the conquerors either could not or dared not inflict effectual punishment. The country, however, was exhausted. There was no more present hope from Spain; and the late leaders were beaten to their knees. Mountjoy, by abstaining from violence, succeeded in quieting opposition, and the new reign was inaugurated by a general pardon. A wet sponge was passed over all the crimes committed against the late Queen. Three-quarters of the Catholic lords and gentlemen had been in arms against the Crown; their disloyalty was forgiven; all who would surrender their lands received them again under letters patent on the tenure of English freeholds. Rory, the late O'Donnell's brother, was created Earl of Tyrconnell. Hugh O'Neil was reinstated, promising to forget his illusions and to be a good servant and subject in consideration of the mercy shown to him. Once more Ireland was to be conciliated.

The illusion lasted for four years. The English undertakers, in the expectation of quiet, flocked over into Munster and Leinster. English order and law began to root themselves, and Protestantism to become a settled institution. The gentle dealing with the insurgents was construed as usual into fear. They determined on one more desperate effort to save their country before it was too late. O'Neil and Tyrconnell, whose sister he had married, were again the intending leaders. They had written to Flanders to the Arch-

duke for support. The conspiracy was discovered. The Earls tacitly confessed their guilt by flying abroad and refusing to return. Sir Cahir O'Dogherty, a hot youth of twenty-one, tried his hand alone, burnt Derry, and murdered the governor. He was hunted down and killed. A few of his followers were hanged, and had places assigned them in the Irish martyrology; and Ireland was once more quiet. But forbearance was now exhausted; and the systematic colonization of Ulster, long understood by English statesmen to be the only remedy for the chronic disorder, yet delayed in mistaken tenderness, was at last resolved on. Though times were changing, the theory of landowning as a beneficial possession, as something yielding an annual profit, which the owner is entitled to spend on his own pleasures, had not yet superseded the more ancient principle. The lord of an estate was still essentially a tenant of the Crown, entrusted with high administrative powers for which he was liable to give an account. When there was no standing army, and every able-bodied man was called on, if necessary, to defend his country or the law, the landlord was his natural officer. A great nobleman could bring into the field hundreds or thousands of retainers, who had been trained to look to him as their leader, and to whom he was the representative of authority. Military power carried with it military obligations, and a commander who betrayed his trust was exposed, justly and necessarily, to the extreme penalties of treason. The desirableness of governing the Irish, wherever

possible, through chiefs of their own race, had hitherto indisposed the English Government in the highest degree to inflict forfeiture. It was a measure to which, except in desperate extremities, they had never resorted. But England had determined also that Irish anarchy should end; and if the Irish leaders showed themselves radically incurable, their opportunities of mischief must be taken away. In the three southern provinces the Irish element had been weakened. In Ulster it remained substantially intact. By this last treason of the two Earls and their confederates six counties were escheated to the Crown—Donegal, Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Cavan, and Armagh. Antrim and Down were already partially occupied by Scots—Western Highlanders, who for three centuries had been forming settlements in Ireland. They had been scarcely distinguishable hitherto from the native race, but they were capable of being reclaimed. Their chief, Sir Randal MacDonnell, or MacConnell, was created Earl of Antrim. The six escheated counties contained in all two million acres. Of these, a million and a half, bog, forest, and mountain, were restored to the Irish. The half million acres of fertile land were settled with families of Scotch and English Protestants.

The long peace in England and the vast expansion of practical energy which followed the Reformation had produced hundreds of thousands of active enterprising men, who were looking for openings to push their fortunes. They had been turning their thoughts to America, but here in Ireland was an America at



their own doors, with the soil ready for the plough. The grants were eagerly taken up. Unlike the Norman conquerors, who were merely military leaders, the new colonists were farmers, merchants, weavers, mechanics, and labourers. They went over to earn a living by labour, in a land which had produced hitherto little but banditti. They built towns and villages; they established trades and manufactures; they enclosed fields, raised farmhouses and homesteads where till then there had been but robbers' castles, wattled huts, and mud cabins, or holes in the earth like rabbit burrows: while, without artificial distinctions, they were saved from degenerating into the native type by their religion, then growing in its first enthusiasm into a living power which pervaded their entire being. Those who suffered were the chiefs, who were dispossessed by the forfeitures, they and their kerns and their gallowglass, the idle lads of mettle, who counted it shame to work, and looked on fighting and killing as the only worthy occupation of man. 'The churles,' 'the earth-tillers,' those who desired to be industrious, who by all writers on the state of Ireland, from the Pander downwards, had been excepted in the general condemnation—they were spared, and lived in peace, scattered among the colonists, on taking an oath to be loyal to the Crown. If the meaning of government be the protection of the honest and laborious, and the punishment of knaves, not the smallest gainers from the Ulster settlement were the worthy among the Irish themselves, who were saved at last from the in-

tolerable oppression under which they and their fathers from immemorial time had groaned. Privileges and prohibitions, which had separated the two races, were abolished, so far as statutes could extinguish them, and Irish and English were declared equal in the eye of the law.<sup>1</sup>

Then, for the first time, the natural wealth of Ireland began to reveal itself. Commerce sprung up, as yet unhampered by navigation acts or disabilities. Busy fingers were set at work on loom and at spinning-wheel. Fields, fenced and drained, grew yellow with rolling corn; and the vast herds and flocks which had wandered at will on hill and valley were turned to profitable account. A live-cattle trade was established with Bristol. Traders from

<sup>1</sup> 'Whereas in former times, after the conquest of this realm by his majesty's royal progenitors Kings of England, the natives of this realm of Irish blood, being descended of those that did inherit and possess this land before the said conquest, were for the most part in continual hostility with the English, and with those that did descend of the English, and therefore the said Irish were held and accounted and in diverse statutes and records were termed and called Irish enemies: Forasmuch as the cause of the said difference and of making the said laws and statutes doth now cease, in that all the natives and inhabitants of this kingdom, without difference or distinction, are taken into his majesty's protection, and do

now live under one law, by means whereof a perfect agreement is or ought to be settled betwixt all his majesty's subjects in this realm: And forasmuch as there is no better means to settle peace and tranquillity in this kingdom, being now inhabited with many worthy persons born in his majesty's several kingdoms, than by abolishing the said laws and giving them free liberty to commerce and match together, so that they may grow into one nation, and there be an utter oblivion and extinguishment of all former difference and disorder between them: be it enacted . . . that all these laws be for ever utterly repealed.'—*Irish Statutes*, 13 James I. cap. 5.

half the ports in Europe came to Cork for salt fish, salt butter, and salt meat. The exquisite Irish wool, which the peasants' wives were learning to weave, but which grew in an abundance far beyond their home consumption, was exchanged in the south of Europe for wine. Portugal and Spain were supplied from the Irish forests with pipe-staves; and the Dutch had their shipyards in Irish creeks and havens, where the timber was excellent and cheap.<sup>1</sup> Population, which had remained stationary for a thousand years, began swiftly to expand. In 1580 the inhabitants of Ireland were reckoned roughly at half a million,<sup>2</sup> and the Protestants among them were too few to be worth counting. In 1641 the population was almost a million and a half,<sup>3</sup> and among them were two hundred and sixty thousand Protestants.<sup>4</sup> When left to themselves the Irish had killed each other down in their perpetual wars, and the children had died for want of food. The institution of the policeman and the cultivation of the soil enabled a race to multiply in geometrical progression, which nature, by the habits with which she had endowed them, intended perhaps to preserve only in more manageable numbers.

The favourable picture had, indeed, another side. If well with the earth-tillers, it was other than well with those who had hitherto been lords paramount,

<sup>1</sup> Macpherson's *History of Commerce*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Report by A. Trollope, addressed to Secretary Walsingham.'

*MSS. Ireland, Record Office.*

<sup>3</sup> 1,466,000.

<sup>4</sup> Petty's *Political Arithmetio*.

and had lived at their own idle will. 'There was peace,' says the latest and most accomplished exponent of the historical wrongs of Ireland,<sup>1</sup> 'but it was the peace of despair; there was prosperity, but among the supplanting strangers.' An Act of Parliament, passed in Strafford's viceroyalty, shows the class into whose souls the iron was entering. 'Whereas,' says that Act,<sup>2</sup> 'there are many young gentlemen of this kingdom that have little or nothing to live on of their own, and will not apply themselves to labour, but live coshering in the country, censing themselves and their followers, their horses and their greyhounds, upon the poorer inhabitants, sometimes exacting money from them, to spare them and their tenants and go elsewhere for their suppers and breakfast, which the poor people dare not deny them . . . and whereas by that lawless kind of life of these idle young gentlemen and others, being commonly active young men and such as seek to have many followers and dependants, many other inconveniences are likely to arise, for they are apt, on the least occasion of disturbance, to rifle and make booty of his majesty's loyal subjects, and to be heads and leaders of outlaws and rebels, and in the meantime do and must support their excessive and expenseful drinking and gaming by secret stealth or growing into debt,'—justices of the peace were empowered to apprehend all such idle persons and commit them to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, by John Prendergast.

<sup>2</sup> 10 & 11 Charles I. cap. 16.

gaol till they could find sufficient securities for their honest and quiet behaviour.

These young gentlemen, being the dispossessed heirs of the forfeited estates, are now held entitled, though they were mischievous and idle, to be regarded with sympathy, because deprived of their lawful inheritance. Ireland would have benefited little from such owners of her soil had they remained in occupation. But the Act describes, in reality, only the inveterate and immemorial habits of so-called Irish gentlemen before forfeiture was heard or thought of. Too vain of their birth to work, and enabled by the custom of the country to live on the plunder of the poor, they were finding at last the law too strong for them. The peasants whom they robbed were also Irish subjects, whose protection is made England's crime.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An expression in the Act shows that the law was becoming feared, and that government was at last a reality. A farmer who a century before had refused to feed and lodge a party of these people would have been promptly hanged or shot. He was still afraid to shut his doors

against them, but for another reason. 'The poor people,' the Act of Parliament says, 'dare not deny them meat, drink, or money, for fear of some scandalous rhyme or song to be made on them, or some worse inconveniency.'

## SECTION II.

MEANWHILE, though the Earls of Tyrconnell and Tyrone had failed to repeal the penal laws, the Catholics remained substantially unmolested.

There was a full staff of archbishops and bishops. Chapels sprung up on all sides. Monasteries were repaired and filled with friars. Priests multiplied with the growth of the people, and were distributed in parishes without need of concealment. The Church throve with the country, and, while able to complain of persecution, practically suffered nothing from it. Two-thirds of the lands in the four provinces still remained in Catholic hands. In the House of Commons, although their powers were controlled by the representatives of the towns of the new settlements, they returned nearly half the members. In the Upper House they had a large majority. They were strong enough to extort from Charles the First a promise of a modification of the Supremacy Oath. It was necessary to remind them by proclamation that the Act of Uniformity remained on the statute book, and that their religious liberties depended on the Crown's indulgence. Fifteen religious houses, which they erected as if in defiance in Dublin itself, under the eye of Government, were seized and condemned. But these houses were soon restored. The proclamations were ridiculed; the hesitation in enforcing the law was

1608

construed into cowardice; and instead of gratitude for the connivance which left them the free exercise of their own forms of worship, they cherished rather a firm and growing determination to wrench the Church lands and the cathedrals out of the hands of their Anglican rivals.

Had the Protestants stood on even terms with them, superior energy might have asserted its supremacy by its own strength. Catholic landlords in the North preferred English tenants to their own people, when they felt in their purses the contrast between the improving stranger and the slovenly and unprofitable Celt; while every Irishman who conformed to Protestantism adopted English habits, and became English in interest as well, finding himself divided by heresy from his countrymen, as effectually as if English blood was in his veins.

But the Catholics were one body. The Protestants to their misfortune were two. Of the Ulster settlers half were Scots and Presbyterians; the Scots in Down and Antrim followed the fashions of the new comers introduced by James; and, among the English undertakers, the Puritan element was powerfully present.<sup>1</sup>

The peculiar conditions of England had arrested the natural growth of the Reformation, and had created an ecclesiastical policy, which even at home was leading fast to civil war. The necessity of

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<sup>1</sup> Londonderry, which was built by the London Company, and settled by London people, was from the first the most Puritan town in Ireland.

identical institutions had extended to Ireland the English forms, but they were forms which could assume a complexion either Catholic or Protestant. The colonists of the North had been chosen from the energetic middle classes in Scotland and England, who had small love for bishops and hated shams; and the bishops themselves, Archbishop Usher especially, the Primate, were so generous in their sympathies, that but for the political ties which connected the established churches of England and Ireland, they would have brought about of their own accord a fusion with the Presbyterian congregations. In the Ulster settlement, for many years after its foundation, there was no practical distinction between Churchman and Dissenter. Both were alike Calvinists with a real belief, and there and there only Protestantism took root, and became aggressive, energetic, and strong.

The undertakers of Elizabeth in Munster and Leinster sprung from another class. They were the younger sons of the old country families; they had transported labourers from their fathers' lands, they had brought with them the feelings and habits of the country party at home. Their creed was traditional, and the main article of it was hatred of Puritans. They too called themselves Protestants, but the vital heat of Protestantism had never been kindled in their veins. The Anglicanism, which in England had a meaning, in Ireland was never more than a barren exotic; and, until the new comers in the North had



introduced another spirit, the Church of Ireland had existed only as if to give point to the sarcasms of the Catholics. One of the Dublin churches was the Viceroy's stable. The choir of another was a tennis court, where the vicar acted as marker. The vaults of Christ Church were used as tap-rooms, where soldiers smoked, and drank, and jested; while the communion service, feeble counterfeit of the mass, was chaunted over their heads in the empty cathedral.<sup>1</sup> When the feeling of religion revived, such a man as Usher was irresistibly drawn in the direction where life was showing itself.

The church theories of Laud and Charles, however, were not of the sort which would submit to be corrected by facts. The Episcopal Church of Ireland, it was said, was the Church of St. Patrick, holding the true Catholic faith, and administered by successors of the Apostles. When it was seen in its majesty, when it had cast out the accursed thing, the Genevan heresy which denied the sacraments, Popery would bend before its authority, and acknowledge its claims. The sore spot was Ulster, and in Ulster the reforms were to commence. Two episcopalian Scots, Robert Echlin and John Leslie, were introduced into the sees of Raphoe and Down; Bramhall, a creature of Laud's, was sent to Derry; and the Act of Uniformity, which was left as a dead letter against the Catholics, was enforced against the Presbyterian

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<sup>1</sup> Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*.

ministers. They were required to obey the bishops, and introduce and use the English Liturgy. All who refused—all, that is, who were sincere and in earnest—were deprived of their cures. A High Commission Court sate in Dublin; canons were passed for ecclesiastical government; and dissent under any Protestant form was utterly prohibited. The Catholics were to be shown the true model of a church which contained all that was most precious in their own system, while it detested Calvinism as heartily as themselves.

A shipload of the expelled ministers sailed for New England to find there the liberty of conscience denied them in the Old World. The vessel was driven back by a storm. They re-landed, recovered courage, and dispersed among their people, where they continued privately to teach and preach. The Scots held sturdily together, encouraged by the attitude of the English Parliament and the firm resolution among their people at home. Sterner measures became necessary. With the temper of England and <sup>1635</sup> Scotland growing critical, it became politically desirable to dragoon Ireland into a more submissive attitude. Ireland, if there were to be civil war, might be made at last useful to the Crown, the very Catholic spirit of it promising for once to be of service, when Protestants were the enemies to be crushed.

It was with some such purpose that, in 1633, Wentworth, better known as Earl of Strafford, was appointed to the Irish viceroyalty. Promises had been

already made to relax the Catholic disabilities. How much could be safely done in this way—what reforms could be introduced into the administration—how, above all things, Ireland's resources might be made available for the service of the Crown, could be determined only on the spot by a competent judgment; and the ablest soldier and statesman on whom the King could rely gave his services for the purpose. Wentworth brought to Dublin with him a large intelligence, and the spirit of a great Englishman. In Church matters he carried out the views of Archbishop Laud. Laud's principles were, perhaps, really his own; at any rate, the enforcement of them seemed essential to his broad political aim. A commission was sent down into Ulster. Such ministers as could be found were arrested. A general oath was demanded of the settlers. They were required to abjure the Scotch Covenant and to swear implicit obedience to the King. To refuse was treated as treason. Multitudes fled into the woods to escape the visit of the commissioners. Some went home to Scotland, others were sent to  
1636 Dublin and imprisoned there. Wentworth, it seemed, was determined either to make them submit, or to drive them out of the country. Rebel in the presence of the Irish they could not; and when the choice lay between conformity and the loss of their estates, he perhaps considered that he might calculate safely on the result.

For Wentworth had not blinded himself to the value of the Anglo-Scotch settlement. He saw Ire-

land with the eye of a born ruler, and whatever concessions he might be prepared to make to conciliate Catholics, he understood perfectly that it was only by the presence of strong English colonies, laid down in the middle of them, that their rebellious spirit could be held in awe. He had no intention of opening a door for anarchy to burst out again; and his design was to carry the principles of colonization a step further, and settle Connaught as Ulster had been settled. North, south, and east, the English interest was now comparatively strong. Connaught was still Irish. Old abbeys continued unsuppressed in Mayo and Galway and Roscommon, the lands of which belonged in law to the Crown. Few, if any, of the gentlemen had availed themselves of James the First's invitation to surrender their lands, and take them back under letters patent. They still held under the Irish custom of tanistry, and had no title-deeds to produce. The country lay waste, the habits of disorder continued unbroken. If Connaught were to become a useful province of the Empire—if, for one thing, it was to yield taxes, and the King's writ was to pass current there—the spell must be broken west of the Shannon, as it had been broken elsewhere.

The state of the tenures created an opportunity. A commission was appointed to survey the lands, and to trace and enquire into the titles <sup>1639</sup> of their professing owners. In strict construction, four-fifths of Connaught was found to belong to the Crown; and Wentworth meditated taking advantage

of the situation to make a new plantation. The intention, scarcely concealed, following so soon on the confiscation of the six counties, flung the Irish of the old blood into a frenzy of rage. Religious indulgence might satisfy the Anglo-Norman Catholics of the old settlements. The passions of the true Irishman were for the land, and he saw the land in large slices passing away from him to the stranger. What to him was King or Parliament, Calvinism or Anglicanism? The one fact, to which all else was nothing, was coming home to his heart, that the Englishman, by force or fraud, was filching from him the inheritance of his fathers.

The form of Wentworth's proceedings was as imperious as the matter was alarming. The parties in Ireland which he respected, and of which alone, perhaps, he expected that any good could be made, were the late English settlers and the Catholics of English descent. The inquisition into titles was extended over the island. Claims were revived that were indefinitely remote. Deeds and records had perished in the Elizabethan rebellions, or had been lost or destroyed in the savage carelessness of Irish life. Yet the Viceroy insisted that the proofs must be forthcoming, or the title could not be allowed; and jurymen, who in such cases failed to find for the Crown, were sent to meditate on their misdemeanours in the county gaols.

The Irish Parliament remonstrated. The King had promised that no claim should be revived  
1640 from beyond sixty years. Wentworth con-

sidered that such a concession was impolitic and uncalled for. Ireland, in his eyes, was a conquered country, possessing no rights but such as he was inclined to allow. Before he could have carried out his policy, he would have had to deal, at all events, with a native insurrection. Never till then had spoliation so direct and unprovoked been attempted.

He had not, however, altogether miscalculated. The dread of the English Puritans was even greater than the indignation at the imperious Viceroy. In the midst of his other work, Wentworth had experienced no difficulty in raising an army. Parliament voted money freely. The Catholic peasants enlisted with eagerness, being willing, at all events, to be armed and organized at the expense of the Government. The levies were intended avowedly for service in Scotland. The Scots, finding that the Irish were to be let loose on them, threatened to send a force to Ulster, and raise and arm their own people there. The rumour spread that the Calvinist fanatics were coming over to destroy the Catholics root and branch; they gathered the more eagerly to Wentworth's standard; and, in the summer of 1640, when the Scots were coming into England, eight thousand Irish infantry and a thousand horse, recruited from the most dangerous classes in Ireland, the 'cosherers' of the Act of Parliament, the marauding vagabonds to whom industry, Protestantism, and England were equally hateful and virtually synonymous, were assembled, ready for mischief, at Carrickfergus. The straits to

which the King was reduced recalled Wentworth prematurely to England. The failure in the North, and the attitude assumed by the Long Parliament, prevented his return. Sir John Clotworthy, an Ulster Presbyterian, whose wife had been persecuted by the High Commission, joined Pym in demanding that the Irish Viceroy should be brought to trial. He had meant—there could be no doubt of it—to use his Irish army in crushing Scotch and English liberty. He was impeached, attainted, and executed. Sir Christopher Wandsworth, whom he had left as Deputy, suddenly dying, the charge of Ireland fell to Sir John Parsons, the Master of the Court of Wards, and Sir John Borlase, the Master of the Ordnance—Puritans both of them, but men of no local weight or influence. The Earl of Ormond commanded the army; and the army, while it held together, was the real master of the country. The English Parliament, however, furious at the use intended for these troops, and not choosing that Ireland should be at the mercy of Papists, extorted from Charles an order that they should be disbanded. In appearance there was immediate obedience. The regiments dispersed. The arms were collected and carried to Dublin. An operation which threatened to be dangerous was accomplished without difficulty and without objection. The danger that remained was of another kind. There was no longer any force at all on which the Government could rely. Three half-famished regiments were all that were left, and Ireland was without a garrison.

## SECTION III.

WE are now upon the edge of the gravest event in Irish history, the turning-point on which all later controversies between England and Ireland hinge. The facts, real or alleged, are all before us ; for the excitement created was so terrible, that the most minute particulars were searched into with agonized curiosity. Thirty-three volumes of depositions are preserved in the library of Trinity College, which tell the tale with perfect distinctness ; and, as the witnesses relate one consistent story, they are dismissed by those who are offended by their testimony as imaginary beings, forgers, liars, and calumniators. The eagerness to discredit the charge is a tacit confession how tremendous is the guilt if it can be proved ; the most certain facts can be made doubtful if they are stoutly and repeatedly denied ; and not evidence but sympathy or inclination determines the historical beliefs of most of us. Those who choose to think that the massacre of 1641 was a dream will not change their opinion. Those who see in that massacre the explanation and the defence of the subsequent treatment of Ireland, however unwilling to revive the memory of scenes which rivalled in carnage the horrors of St. Bartholomew, are compelled to repeat the evidence once held to be unanswerable.

That a rebellion should have broken out at that



particular time was in itself so natural that a looker-on might have predicted it with certainty.

The Irish, still passionately attached to their own habits and their own creed, had seen the conquerors whom they had so long successfully held at bay, at last definitely established among them. Plantations of aliens were in their midst, owning the lands which had once been theirs, and growing rich and powerful. Forays out of the Pale they could defy and smile at. The Saxon bands came and went; crops might be burnt and cattle lifted; but, when the invaders were gone, the air closed behind them, and the losses could be made good by answering raids into the four counties. The colonists, on the other hand, were an ever-present affront, whom, by all laws of God and man, they were entitled, when they had them at advantage, to destroy. The English interest was growing; their own was falling. Soul and body they were alike being made slaves. The prelates of an alien and heretic Church had seized their sanctuaries, daring to call themselves the representatives of their own saints, and claiming *ex officio* spiritual jurisdiction over them. Anglican might persecute Calvinist; the wolf might worry the wild dog: to the true Catholic, wolf and dog were alike abhorrent; Anglican and Calvinist were equally heretics, and the heretics were children of hell. England offered them material prosperity; they did not care for prosperity. England talked of order; the order of England to them was tyranny and spoliation. England might govern her

own affairs in her own way. What was Ireland to her! Bogs might be drained, and forests fall, and the green Erin grow black under the plough; towns might rise, and mills, and looms, and warehouses; they were but badges of Irish servitude. 'The Irish thought,' said one of them, 'and will ever think, the English government a yoke of slavery. They were determined to shake off a chain under which for a hundred years and more the whole nation had groaned.'<sup>1</sup>

In such a humour nothing was needed but opportunity, and they might have thought Providence itself was inviting them at that moment, to rise and free themselves. There was no Viceroy and no army. The Lords Justices, Parsons and Borlase, were unpopular even among the English, and had no local influence or connections. The whole country had been exasperated and alarmed by Strafford's inquisitions. No one knew whether he might not rise the next morning and find himself a landless outcast. The High Church Commission and the political crisis in England had set the Protestants quarrelling among themselves. The gentlemen were for the King; the Ulster settlers were for the Dublin Government and the Long Parliament. There were eight thousand disbanded Catholic soldiers in the country, collected with the view of fighting Calvinists in Scotland, and far more willing to undertake the same business at home. Lastly and chiefly, 'England's difficulty was Ireland's oppor-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Grave jugum sub quo a centum et quod excurrit annis tota natio ingemiscit excutere statuunt.'

tunity.' The war between the King and the Parliament was on the point of breaking out, and neither side would have means or leisure to attend to Ireland. The scattered handful of men which the Lords Justices could dispose of would be overcome at the first effort; and, if it proved necessary or desirable to colour the rising under a decent name, nothing could be easier than to pretend that the troops were taking arms in the King's name and for the King's service, against the revolted Parliament. Add to this the natural fear that if the Puritan party became dominant in England the Catholic religion would be in danger of violent extinction; and that, with a combination of conditions so propitious, the Irish chiefs should have designed a universal insurrection requires no explanation. The miracle would have been if they had remained quiet.

But in so tangled a business there were many interests and many intervening purposes. The native Irish saw their way clearly. Protestants, Scotch and English, Anglican and Puritan, were their universal and deadly enemies. On the other hand, the Anglo-Normans of the Pale were Catholics, like the Irish, but they had not forgotten their connection with England. Ormond, though an Anglican, was one of themselves; he was the chosen general of the army which had been disbanded; and again, most of the English families who had settled in the South were ardent Royalists. Thus it was no easy matter to agree on a common course. From the first there can

be traced two principles and two parties, which continued divided throughout the whole rebellion and perplexed the action of it. The great Catholic nobles—Lord Gormanston, Lord Fingal, Lord Antrim, Lord Castlehaven—had no sympathy with murder and pillage. They were gentlemen with an honourable purpose, and loyal at heart to the English Crown. They believed, that by loyalty at such a crisis, they could purchase the restoration of the Catholic religion, and perhaps of the six confiscated counties; but they had no intention of letting the settlers be destroyed, or of staining their cause with acts which the conscience of mankind would condemn.

No scruples of this kind restrained the kinsmen of the dispossessed chiefs of Ulster, or those others of the old blood who had been threatened by Strafford's inquisitions. To them the English were piratical and heretic invaders, who were robbing them of their lands, liberties, and faith—who had shown no mercy and were entitled to none—whom by any and all means they were entitled to destroy from out of the midst of them. It mattered little with the O'Neils and Maguyres who was king of England. They desired to be quit of England. If Charles turned Catholic, an English king would still be an English king. Catholic or Protestant, he would not restore the confiscated counties. Ireland was theirs, to live in at their own will and in their own way, and they meant to have it.

The aims of two parties so wide apart were neces-

sarily irreconcilable, yet each was willing to have the assistance of the other for immediate measures in opposition to the Puritans. Each had sufficient confidence in its own resources to believe that it could control the work when the beginning was once made.

With the Barons of the Pale the King himself was in private communication. The Irish Parliament had passed the vote by which the army had been raised, avowedly to assist the Government against the revolt of the Scots. When Strafford had been executed and the Parliament had forced Charles to dismiss the Irish troops, he was not to be blamed if in his extreme difficulty he turned his eyes to such of his subjects as seemed loyal and had promised effective service. An Irish gentleman, one of the Burkes of Clanrickarde, had gone over, to see and speak with the King on the part of the Irish nobility, in the summer of 1641. The King sent him back with a letter of credit,<sup>1</sup> and a private message to the Earls of Ormond and Antrim, that they should keep the disbanded men together, add if possible to their number, and, when opportunity offered, should seize Dublin Castle and give them back their arms.

Ormond, understanding better perhaps than his master the danger of attempting such an enterprise, hesitated to obey; and Antrim, at Ormond's desire, despatched Captain Digby, the Constable of Dunluce,

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<sup>1</sup> 'You are to repair to Ormond and Antrim in Ireland, who are to give credit to what you say to them from us. C. R.'—'Information of the Marquis of Antrim,' *Hibernia Anglicana*, Appendix, p. 49.

for more precise instructions. Charles repeated his commands, even directing Antrim explicitly, if he could collect the army, to declare openly against the English Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

Antrim at once communicated with the leading Barons of the Pale and with the Ulster chiefs. His intention, as he afterwards admitted, was to move the Parliament at Dublin to act as the King desired, and to vote formally for the reassembling of the army. If the Lords Justices interfered, he meant to carry out his master's orders fully, take Dublin Castle, and arrest everywhere the leading Protestants who might threaten to be dangerous.

'The fools,' Lord Antrim said, 'well liking the business, would not expect our time and manner for ordering the work, but fell upon it without us, and sooner and otherwise than we would have done, taking to themselves and in their own way the management of the work, and so spoiled it.'

'The fools' were the native Irish, who had other and more practical objects than the Earl of Antrim.

For years past there had been uneasy symptoms that the volcanic elements were working towards a new eruption. In 1634 Emer Macmahon, afterwards the notorious Bishop of Clogher, informed Wentworth that mischief was in the wind; he himself, as he said, having been employed to feel the pulse of France

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<sup>1</sup> 'You are to repair to Ormond from us. C. R.'—'Information of and Antrim in Ireland, who are to give credit to what you say to them the Marquis of Antrim,' *Hibernia Anglicana*, Appendix p. 49.

and Spain. Flights of friars and priests, with old soldiers who had served on the Continent, had been observed latterly crossing back through England to Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Whispers were abroad that an insurrection

<sup>1</sup> The Catholics had a majority in the Irish Parliament, notwithstanding the Act of Elizabeth. How completely the Catholic Church was organized in Ireland is very little realized. Of practical intolerance there was at this time none at all. The Catholics were indulged to the uttermost, and therefore rebelled. The Irish Council, on June 30, 1641, wrote to Sir Harry Vane:—

‘We lately received a petition in the name of the archbishop, bishop, and clergy now assembled in Dublin, wherein they complain that they see in their dioceses a foreign jurisdiction publicly exercised, and swarms of Popish priests and friars openly professing themselves by words and habits, to the outdaring of the law, the pressure of the subject, and the impoverishing the kingdom. And seeing that instead of that due obedience which the Popish pretended clergy ought to have rendered to the law, they break out into insolence and inordinate assemblies, holding of convocations, and exercising jurisdiction, we may not be silent, it being apparent that such insolent beginnings may proceed to further and so general mischief as may prove the original of dangerous alterations. At Drogheda there is a house for a nunnery

lately erected, so spacious as it contains four score windows of a side. In and about this city are supposed to be many hundreds of Jesuits, friars and priests, which extraordinary convention of so many of them cannot be for any good purpose.’ —‘The Irish Council to Sir H. Vane, June 30.’ *MSS. Record Office.*

Enclosed in this letter was a curious illustrative sketch of the condition of the diocese of Tuam:—

‘Doctor Laughlin Kaolly, titular Archbishop of Tuam, is very public among us. He presents himself openly in general assemblies. He travels up and down with great companies. He is plentifully maintained, generally respected, feeds of the best, and it is a strife among the great ones who shall be happy in being the host of such a guest. Every church living in the province of Connaught hath a Romish priest as constantly as a Protestant minister entitled or assigned thereunto. The country suffers grievously under the charge of a double clergy — Protestant and Papist. They have everywhere their mass-houses, whereunto the people in multitudes resort, and that not privately but in a public braving manner.

was at hand; and, early in 1641, Sir Harry Vane warned the Lords Justices to be on their guard. Catholic preachers had been inveighing louder than usual from their pulpits on the progress of heresy, commenting on the supposed malignant intentions of the English Parliament towards Ireland, and commending vaguely to the prayers of the congregations the success of some great design which was in hand for the preservation of the faith.<sup>1</sup> The Irish Parliament, composed of Catholics and Protestants in nearly equal numbers, the Catholics slightly predominating, sate late into the summer. The members of the House of Commons were the extremes of both parties, and were equally bitter against Lord Strafford and the

‘The friars swarm *hic illic et ubique*, and are often most in the highways in their habits. In Dunmore is a house consisting of a prior and thirty friars, which have their oratory, dormitory, refectory, &c., and observe the rites of their order as fully as when they were in Spain. Another abbey at Kilconnell, with as many or more; and conspicuous nunnery, wherein are many young gentlewomen, daughters of lords, knights, and the best of the country.

‘The titular Archbishop of Tuam and his suffragans do publicly and powerfully exercise jurisdiction, and such obedience is given them by the natives, that the jurisdiction of our Church is altogether neglected.

‘The nation, weary of the charge

of a double clergy, do much repine at our ministers. They keep back tithes, conceal their glebes, deny them any place of residence, where they might look to their flocks. But, what is most grievous to us, they do maliciously indict them and their proctors at the assizes, and call them to the Parliament to their utter undoing, for no other cause but for receiving such customs as were antiently paid to their predecessors.’—‘Remonstrances of Grievances in the Province of Tuam, June 12, 1641.’ MSS. Record Office.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Irish Rebellion*, by Sir John Temple. Temple was made Master of the Rolls in Dublin in 1640, and was the contemporary of all, and eye-witness of many, of the scenes which he describes.



Government. A knot of Catholic barristers, patriots of the familiar type, had put themselves forward as the spokesmen of Irish grievances; clamouring for self-government, the repeal of Poyning's Act, the dismissal of the English garrisons, and the establishment of a militia; and the Protestant representatives, with the infatuation which has so often distinguished Irish Protestant politicians, had applauded them to the echo.<sup>1</sup> The Chancellor Sir Richard Bolton, Chief Justice Lowther, Sir Geo. Radcliff, the Bishop of Derry (Bramhall), and the Bishop of Cork (Chappel) were impeached.<sup>2</sup> A Committee of the Commons

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Audley Mervyn, of Fermanagh, a Protestant, was the most eloquent of the patriotic orators in this Parliament. He repented and atoned for his folly in the suppression of the rebellion. — *Relation of Occurrences as presented to the House of Commons in England*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Audley Mervyn, June 4, 1642.

<sup>2</sup> The Irish Parliament was so intent on these impeachments that it claimed to be the supreme judicial court of Ireland, and insisted that, by the constitution, it had power of life and death. The Lords Justices tried to temporize, but the Government party was in a minority in both Houses. On June 30, 1641, the Lords Justices and Council wrote to Sir Harry Vane:—

‘What resolution they (the Parliament) will take for deferring or not deferring the proceedings against those persons we know not as yet, but conceive that most of

the Papists in the House and some of the Protestants incline to the latter, whereby they are like to carry it by majority of votes, for in these two last sessions we find many Protestants (and no Papists at all, unless some few not able to appear) removed from the House, and new elections ordered to be made, and in some of their rooms Papists brought in, which is a great weakening of the Protestant party in the House.’—*MSS. Ireland*, 1641. Record Office.

Finding the impeachment pressed, the Lords Justices were obliged to meet it by a bill of general pardon for all offences. Government being completely paralyzed by the action of the two Houses, and the Lords showing a disposition to accept the pardon as an alternative, the bill was sent over for approval, with a request that it might be instantly returned.

‘We conceive it necessary to be

carried the complaints of the House to London<sup>1</sup>—complaints of injury to trade, monopolies, the High

so at this time,' the Council wrote on July 1, 'whereby confidence and security may be rendered not only to all ministers of the Crown who are now very fearful in the course of their employments, but also to all his majesty's subjects of the kingdom in general. In this act of free pardon persons impeached of treason in Parliament here are included, which we think fit to mention to you, to the end his majesty may be acquainted therewith as a thing we hope not displeasing to him.'

Even to this pardon it was necessary to make two exceptions, so hateful the High Church bishops had made themselves. A postscript adds:—

'We conceive that if the Lord Bishop of Derry and the Lord Bishop of Cork be not excepted in the pardon it will be the more difficult to pass it in both Houses. Wherefore there is a clause inserted in the pardon excepting them both as to crimes, yet so as the treason whereof the Bishop of Derry is impeached in Parliament stands pardoned.'—*MSS.* Record Office, 1641.

The bill was conceded, but the Parliament did not choose to wait for its return, but continued to press violently for the judicial sovereignty. The two Houses passed a declaration of rights, which Sir William Parsons forwarded on July 21.

'You see,' he writes to Sir Harry Vane, 'with what vehemency and a kind of eager postulation they press for jurisdiction. The danger threatened to the English and his majesty's servants in allowing them jurisdiction in capital causes doth daily more and more appear here, and I doubt not is foreseen then.'—'Sir Wm. Parsons to Sir Harry Vane, July 21, 1641.' *Ibid.*

The invaluable letters of the Lords Justices before and during the rebellion, preserved in the Record Office, have never been published, and dispose, with a ludicrous completeness, of the plea of the Irish Catholics, that they took arms to defend themselves against the supposed Puritan tendencies of the English governors. Throughout the summer of 1641, when Parsons and Borlase were charged with meditating a persecution, their letters display nothing but the most profound alarm, and consciousness of their helpless position.

<sup>1</sup> Among the grievances presented by the Parliament was one which showed how strongly the Irish element was already in the ascendant.

The Commons complained of 'the national distinction made in the late plantations, by which it was provided that the Irish nation should be debarred from purchasing or acquiring estates of inheritance further than at the first distribution of the lands was assigned them.'

Commission Court, inquisitious into titles and arbitrary powers; and the Parliament declared itself in permanent session till part at least of their requests were granted.<sup>1</sup>

Some uneasiness had been felt at the number of disbanded soldiers at large and in idleness.<sup>2</sup> A pro-

‘The object,’ the English Council observes, ‘was that the British undertakers should be maintained at their first strength without encroachment of the Irish upon them to the lessening of their proportion, so that none were allowed to purchase but such as were of English descent.’

The Council—again a remarkable commentary on this supposed intention of the Puritan English Parliament to exterminate the Irish nation—recommended that the distinction should be abolished.—‘Council Note, May 27, 1641.’ *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> ‘We daily expect the coming of the Connaught Act, and that of Limitation, and the Parliament will not incline to hear of an adjournment until they come over.’—‘Sir Adam Loftus to Sir Harry Vane, July 24.’ *MSS. Ireland, Record Office.*

The Catholics insisted afterwards clamorously on their loyalty throughout to Charles the First. Charles, in return for the Act of Limitation and the surrender of his rights on Connaught, had required a better organization of the Customs revenues. Loftus adds:—

‘If these acts pass the royal

assent before the King’s couriers be likewise speeded, I fear if this can be once finished, that which concerns his majesty will have but slow motion; and therefore I think it would stand with all the reason that can be, that in the first place those things which concern his majesty might first be agitated, and then what concerns the people fully be completed. And in truth all that is desired for his majesty is in no way valuable in respect of those great graces and bounties which they now expect and make themselves sure of.’

<sup>2</sup> There was a delay in disbanding them from want of money. On May 12 the Lords Justices write:—‘This kingdom is most fearfully robbed and harassed by the soldiers in every part where they come. They go six or seven miles from their garrisons, and rob houses, and take all they meet with on their way, and do all the mischief that can be. We have not had a penny these four weeks to give them. There is no martial law to govern them, which they knowing do what they list. The people suffer (bear with) much because they are Papists, *wherein there is some mystery,*

posal had been made to send them abroad into the Spanish or Portuguese service, but objections were raised and it was dropped.<sup>1</sup> Antrim had not at that

*but certainly no good to us.*—‘The Lords Justices to Sir Harry Vane, May 12.’ Ibid.

<sup>1</sup> Orders came in June to ship part of the army for Portugal, and transports came from England to Cork harbour for them. The Catholic clergy became immediately suspiciously busy in endeavouring to keep them at home.

The Council write on June 30 to Vane:—

‘There was great underhand labouring among the priests, friars, and Jesuits to dissuade the disbanded soldiers from departing the kingdom. On receipt of your letter we sent orders to all the ports for seizing all Popish books that shall be brought in; as also to inform us what number of Jesuits, priests, and friars have arrived, and what number of soldiers who have had command abroad.’

On June 9 Captain Thomas Serle deposed that ‘as he rode from Dundalk to Drogheda in company of Lieutenant Flower, he observed in the highway near Dunleary thirty or forty of the late disbanded army in a cluster. Also he saw a man about fifty years old on horseback, discoursing with them in Irish. “Lieutenant Flower, who speaks the language, after some conference with the man, told him (Captain Serle) he conceived the man was a Romish priest or friar,

for he had seen part of his hairy vestment; and besides, the priest had declared to him that he had advised the said soldiers on his blessing, that none of them should depart the kingdom to any foreign employment, but rather they should stay at home, though they lived only on bread and milk, for that there might be use for them here.’

‘The same day he observed about a thousand others of the said army travelling the same way.’—‘Examination of Captain T. Serle, June 9.’ *MSS. Ireland, 1641.* Record Office.

On August 3, after the Parliament had decided that the soldiers were not to go, Parsons writes:—

‘We send you the suit of Parliament, and reasons for the stay of the men to be sent over seas. *We formerly wrote to your Honours how the priests had laboured in that business. Now you see the strong influence of those priests upon all public business here, in so much as they are able to guide the whole Parliament, the Papist votes being now strongest, to such a motion quite cross to his majesty’s commands, which we often declared unto them [the Catholic leaders knew Charles’ secret wishes better than the Lords Justices], specially in a business which is really rather against than for the public peace and safety, and which few men of*

time received his final orders from Charles. The Irish committee lingered in England, but the Parliament in Dublin having received assurances from them that their petitions were granted, there was the usual separation for the harvest at the beginning of August, and the session was adjourned till November. Captain Digby returned presently after; and had the 'fools,' as Lord Antrim called them, remained quiet in the interval, the King's orders would have probably been carried out, and Dublin Castle been successfully seized as soon as Parliament reassembled.

The Catholic leaders meanwhile had talked over their plans among themselves. At the beginning of October,<sup>1</sup> the leading Catholic clergy and laity met at a Franciscan abbey in Westmeath,<sup>2</sup> to discuss the course to be taken with the Protestant settlers who were scattered over the country. That they must be dispossessed was a matter of course; it was the price of the co-operation of the Celts; but whether by death or banishment was undecided. According to the priests, heretics were disentitled to mercy. The less

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understanding are not persuaded of, save that they desire to keep as strong a party here as they can for other ends, chiefly if anything touching religion should be in earnest pressed upon them.'—'Sir Wm. Parsons to Sir H. Vane, August 3, 1641.' Ibid.

<sup>1</sup> The priests had been busy with their meetings all the summer. 'In Whitsun week there was a great assembly of them gathered

at the wood of Maynooth. Divers gentlemen were solicited to meet at that assembly, and some refused to be there.'—'The Irish Council to Sir H. Vane, June 30.' Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Deposition of Henry Jones, Dean of Kilmore, *Hibernia Anglicana*, Appendix, 9. Dr. Jones received an account of this meeting from a Franciscan friar who was present. Cf. Temple, p. 129.

violent party considered that massacres were ugly things, and left an ill name behind them. The Spanish princes, whose orthodoxy was above suspicion, had not exterminated the Moors, but had allowed them to return to Africa. More savage measures might perhaps be displeasing to God, and would certainly exasperate England in the highest degree.

On the other side it was urged, that the example of the Moors told for the opposite conclusion. Europe had suffered ever since from the Algerine pirates, who, had there been a general massacre, would never have existed. Ireland would, at all events, have to count on the worst that England could do. Banished men might come back with swords in their hands; and the policy, at once wisest and safest, would be to destroy them when the opportunity was in their hands.

The majority at the meeting declined these violent counsels. They determined to be loyal to the King, to stand by him in his present difficulties, and expect in return from his gratitude the re-establishment of their religion and the restoration of the lands. The minority departed unconvinced, resolved to take their own way.

The natural chief of the Irish at this time was the nephew of the Earl of Tyrone, Owen Rory O'Neil. Owen Roe—so he was called—was in Flanders. The confederates wrote to him. He promised to return and place himself at their head as soon as the insurrection had broken out. The command meanwhile fell to

his cousin, Sir Phelim, who had been educated in England as a Protestant, but on coming back to his estates had relapsed to the creed of his ancestors. At Dublin, during the session, and afterwards in the autumn, at Sir Phelim's house in Ulster, the patriot leaders had met and concerted their plans. The chief conspirators in this separate distinctively Irish council were Sir Philip himself, Lord Maguyre of Fermanagh, an Irish peer, a youth of twenty-five; Philip O'Reilly, a lawyer and a popular speaker in Parliament; Hugh MacMahon,<sup>1</sup> and his brother Emer the Vicar-General, afterwards Bishop of Clogher,<sup>2</sup> Roger Moore, one of the Moores of Leax; and a friar of Dundalk.

The Bishop of Clogher was the brain of the enterprise, and in the main directed the course which was to be pursued. Acquainted, as the conspirators were, with the views of Antrim and the Pale Lords, they had made up their minds to act independently of them, and render temporizing and half-measures impossible.

Rents and taxes were paid in Ireland on November 1. At the end of October the treasury at Dublin was empty. The tenant's half year's rent was in his own hand. His crops were housed. The high winds at the fall of the year made communication with England at that time always uncertain, and the autumn of 1641

<sup>1</sup> Grandson of the Earl of Tyrone. Hugh MacMahon was a gentleman of good fortune.

<sup>2</sup> 'Relation of the Lord Maguyre.' Borlase, *History of the Irish Rebellion*, Appendix, p. 2.

was exceptionally wild. A blow struck simultaneously and fiercely over the whole North, without a note of warning, might crush the English settlement and the English religion at once and for ever. The priests were ready-made instruments by which such a plot could be organized without a trace of it going abroad; and Ulster, once delivered, the rest of the island might be trusted to follow the pattern. The seizure of Dublin Castle, part of Antrim's programme, was equally essential to the plans of Sir Phelim O'Neil. Arms for nine thousand men were in the cellars there, and the command of Dublin would be the command over Parliament and country.

October 23 was market day in Dublin, and strange faces would attract no attention in the streets. It was determined that, on October 23, Sir Phelim should surprise Londonderry, Sir Henry O'Neil Carrickfergus, Sir Con Magennis Newry. Lord Maguyre and Hugh Macmahon undertook the more difficult enterprize at Dublin, while, in the whole North on the same day, the Irish people were to rise and dispose of the English settlers and their families. No distinct directions were probably given about killing them. An Irish mob let loose upon defenceless enemies might be left to their own discretion in such a matter. The order was to drive them from their houses; strip them—man, woman, and child—of their property, strip them even of the clothes upon their backs, to take such chances of life as the elements would allow, in the late autumn, to human existence



turned adrift amidst sleet and rain, without food or covering. The Scots, of whom there were several thousand families in Ulster, were to be left, if possible, unmolested. To divide the interests of Scots from English would make the work more easy; and there was a fear, perhaps, of offending the Earl of Antrim, whose wife was herself a Protestant.

The secret was admirably kept. Sir William Cole, of Fermanagh,<sup>1</sup> reported at the beginning of the month,<sup>2</sup> that the Irish appeared restless. The meetings at Sir Phelim's house had been noticed, and Maguyre's movements had seemed mysterious. On the 21st more exact information enabled Cole to take measures for the safety of Enniskillen; but the warning letter which he despatched to the Lords Justices was intercepted on the road.

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<sup>1</sup> The Coles came to Ireland among the colonists of James the First, and settled in Fermanagh in 1611.

<sup>2</sup> October, 1641.

## SECTION IV.

ON October 22 the Irish leaders repaired to their posts. Lord Maguyre, Hugh Macmahon, and Roger Moore came openly into Dublin, as if on ordinary business. Their friends stole in under cover of the market. The Government was so unconscious of danger that no difficulty whatever was anticipated in the surprise of the castle. When the arms were secured, the intention was to call Parliament instantly, and to raise an army in the King's name. At the last moment the conspiracy was revealed, but in so strange a manner that the information was almost discredited as an idle tale. On the night of the 22nd, an Irishman named Owen O'Conolly, who had lived in the family of Sir John Clotworthy, had been converted there, and was now a Presbyterian elder, came in a strange excited state to Sir William Parsons and told him, that in a few hours Dublin Castle would be taken by rebels. His story was that he had been drinking with Hugh Macmahon, and that Macmahon had taken him into confidence, and invited him to join. Parsons bade him to go about his business as a drunken fool.<sup>1</sup> He

1641  
Oct. 22

<sup>1</sup> Such was the generally received story. Parsons in his own account, written within two days of the event, says nothing of Conolly being drunk, or of his having disbelieved his account.

'On Friday, the 22nd, at nine o'clock,' he writes, 'Owen Conolly, servant to Sir John Clotworthy, came to me, the Lord Justice Parsons, in great secrecy, as indeed the case did require, and discovered

retired, but held fast to the thought which was ever present in his mind. As the night went on, and he became more collected, he went back, and persisting in his account obtained attention at last. The castle gates were closed and the watch manned; Macmahon and Lord Maguyre were taken; and Roger Moore, and the rest, finding that their stroke had missed, escaped out of the town. Dublin was saved. Unhappily there had been no Owen O'Conolly to sound the alarm in the Ulster farmhouses. The Ulster farmers, dispersed, surprised, and isolated, became the helpless victims of Irish ferocity on a scale on which it has rarely had an opportunity of displaying itself.

It does not fall within the purpose of the present history to relate circumstantially the scenes which followed. Inasmuch, however, as Catholic historians either deny their reality altogether, slur them over as enormously exaggerated, or lay the blame on the Protestants as the first beginners of violence; and

unto me a wicked and damnable conspiracy, plotted and contrived by the Irish Papists. The plot was, on the then next morning, Saturday, October 23, being Ignatius's day, about nine o'clock, to surprise the castle of Dublin, the principal magazine of his majesty's arms and munition; and it was agreed among them that, at the same hour, all other his majesty's forts and magazines of arms in the kingdom should be surprised by other of the conspirators. Further, that all the Protestants and English through-

out the whole kingdom that would not join them should be cut off, and so those Papists should become possessed of the Government and the kingdom at the same time.

'As soon as I heard that intelligence I repaired to the Lord Justice Borlase. We assembled the Council, and having sate in Council all that night as also all the next day, Oct. 23, we caused the castle to be strengthened with armed men,' &c.—'The Lords Justices to the Earl of Leicester, October 25, 1641.' *MSS. Record Office.*

inasmuch as the justification of the subsequent policy of England towards Ireland depends upon the truth of events of which the recollection was kept alive for a century by a solemn annual commemoration, it is necessary to relate briefly the outline of those events as recorded by eyewitnesses, who were examined in Dublin, fresh from the scenes which they had witnessed, before commissioners 'of known integrity;' men of all stations and of both nations, whose evidence is the eternal witness of blood which the Irish Catholics have from that time to this been vainly trying to wash away.<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of that fatal Saturday there appeared, before the houses of the settlers and their tenants, in the six escheated counties, gangs of armed Irish, who demanded instant possession, and on being admitted, ejected the entire families, and stripped most of them to the skin.

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<sup>1</sup> The sworn depositions remain, as I said, in Trinity College. Already, in Sir John Temple's time, the Catholics had begun to declaim against 'these evidences of their cruelty, and lively attestations given in to perpetuate the memory of them, to their eternal infamy.'—Temple, Preface, p. 16. Dr. Curry dismisses 'the enormous heap of malignity and nonsense,' as he calls it, on the ground of a supposed discovery that, in '*infinitely the greater number*' of the depositions the commissioners' attestation of them as 'being duly sworn' is struck through with a pen, thus

reducing their value to random statements. — *Review of the Civil War in Ireland*, p. 176. No doubt these volumes of evidence were justly painful to Dr. Curry. An examination of the originals, however, shows that the erasures, so far from being found in '*infinitely the greater number*,' are found in relatively very few, and so far from invalidating the authority of the depositions, are rather a proof of the scrupulous care with which the commissioners distinguished between fact and hearsay.—Compare Reid, *History of the Presbyterians in Ireland*.

Many resisted and were killed; many, the young vigorous men especially, who could save their own lives by flight, sought shelter for their women and their little ones in the houses of their Irish neighbours, with whom they had lived in intimacy. The doors of their neighbours were opened in seeming hospitality; but within there were not human beings—not even human savages—but ferocious beasts. ‘The priests had so charmed the Irish, and laid such bloody impressions on them, as it was held a mortal sin to give relief or protection to the English.’<sup>1</sup> Fugitives admitted to shelter are sacred in the Arab tent or the Indian wigwam. These helpless ones were either betrayed to the ruffians out of doors, or murdered by their hosts. There were of course exceptions. An entire nation cannot at once and universally put off the feelings which connect them with their kind. Some families were sent with escorts to the sea; nor does a universal massacre appear at first to have been anywhere deliberately designed.<sup>2</sup> Passion, however, was

<sup>1</sup> Temple.

<sup>2</sup> The contemporary accounts agree mainly that, during the first week, there were few or no deliberate murders. On October 24, Lord Chichester, writing from Belfast, says that the Irish had taken Charlemont, Dungannon, Tonderagee, and Newry, with all the military stores in them. Fires were visible all over the country; farms and villages burning; but, so far, Lord Chichester could not learn that

‘they had slain more than one man.’ —‘Lord Chichester to the King, October 24, Belfast.’ *MSS. Ireland* Record Office.

All the accounts agree, on the other hand, that the pillaging, stripping, and burning were universal. Colonel Audley Mervyn, who was present in Ulster during the first three months of the insurrection, says that ‘they were surprised so suddenly that the Irish servant, who overnight was undress-

exasperated by the failure of parts of the scheme, which would have given the leaders political control.

ing his master, the next morning was stripping master and mistress. In the twinkling of an eye, corporations, towns, villages were blazing; men, women, and children, of all ranks, exposed by hundreds naked on the mountains, and dying of cold.'

But the forbearance, such as it might be, was soon ended.

'Nakedness and famine,' Colonel Mervyn says, 'were judged over-slow executioners. Then entered the sword, destroying at first with the scabbard on, the rebels, under pretence of convoy, inviting the scattered and hidden Protestants into a body, that so they might make each surviving man an executor to the last murdered in his presence, and so the whole line one by one extinguished; the Irish priest, as ordinary, administered for all.

'*Out of the county of Fermanagh, one of the best planted counties with English, I could never give account of twenty men escaped, except, which is most improbable, they should flee to Dublin. Having enquired from prisoners by name for such and such, they have informed me they were all massacred. The Blackwater, in Tyrone, had its streams dyed in blood, there being at one time 200 souls murdered on the bridge and flung down the river.*'—*Relation of Occurrences*, by Colonel Audley Mervyn.

On December 1—I am particular

about these dates, because it is insisted that the story of the massacre was an afterthought, made up in the following year to justify the confiscation of the estates of the insurgents—on December 1 a petition was presented to the English Parliament, signed by the Irish Council, stating that there were then 40,000 rebels in the field 'Their tyranny,' says this document, 'is so great, that they put both man, woman, and child that are Protestants to the sword, not sparing either age, sex, degree, or reputation. They have stripped naked many Protestants, and so sent them to the city—men and women. They have ravished many virgins and women before their husbands' faces, and taken their children and dashed their brains against the walls in the sight of their parents, and at length destroyed them likewise without pity or humanity.'

On December 14 the following letter from Ireland was read in the English Parliament:—

'All I can tell you is the miserable state we continue under, for the rebels daily increase in men and munition in all parts, except the province of Munster, exercising all manner of cruelties, and striving who can be most barbarously exquisite in tormenting the poor Protestants, cutting off their ears, fingers, and hands, plucking out

The ill-success at Dublin was not the only disappointment. Sir Wm. Cole saved Enniskillen. Naked men, flying for their lives, carried the alarm to Derry, Coleraine, and Carrickfergus, and the inhabitants had time to close their gates. Murder, the Irish writers say, was begun only in retaliation. The first blood, they affirm, was shed at Island Magee, early in November, when three thousand Catholics were killed by the garrison of Carrickfergus.<sup>1</sup> Were this story

their eyes, boiling the hands of little children before their mothers' faces, stripping women naked and ripping them up,' &c.

Even Richard Beling, the passionate defender of the Catholics, one of the authorities for the charge that Parsons and Borlase did not try to stop the rebellion, but let it extend for the sake of the expected confiscations, half confirms in shame, Sir Phelim O'Neil's barbarities.

'O'Neillus,' he says, 'Neurium Viasque munitiones cepit, nec consternatus animo dum Baronis Maguyre sortem rescit arma abjicit; sed ad vindictam potius respiciens plures in suâ Provinciâ turbas ac tragedias excitat, paucisque cum copiis iisque inermibus plurima præstat contra ejus provinciæ Anglos et Scotos multum animo consternatos, etiam minus, si vera referuntur, in Catholico viro probanda.' — *Vindiciæ Catholicorum Hiberniæ*, by Richard Beling, 1650.

<sup>1</sup> The Irish defences have taken many forms. Nicholas French,

titular Bishop of Ferns, in the book in which he compares Ireland under the Cromwellians to the Bleeding Iphigenia, insists with admirable audacity, that there had been at first no rebellion at all—only a stir of a few discontented people, which was converted afterwards into a national rising by the malicious misrepresentations of the Lords Justices.

'It is objected,' he says, 'that the Irish were the first aggressors. The objection is easily answered. It is a common doctrine of divines, that it is lawful to prevent an evil that cannot be otherwise avoided than by preventing. I see you taking your pistol in your hand, cocking it to shoot at me. In that case it is lawful for me to discharge my pistol and kill you. This was the case of the confederate Catholics. There was no other door open for them but by preventing the Presbyterians' bloody design.'—*The Bleeding Iphigenia*, by the Right Rev. N. French, Bishop of Ferns, 1674.

true, there is something *naïve* in the complaint that soldiers appointed to keep the peace should have used

Compare with this daring assertion a letter written on the spot and at the time by Sir John Temple to Charles the First, describing the actions of these 'few insignificant people,' and the real feeling about it of the Dublin government. The date is December 12, 1641 :—

'I humbly beseech your majesty to give me leave to represent to you the miserable condition of this your kingdom, which lies now desperately bleeding and will expire under the weight of the present calamity, unless your majesty shall apply some powerful remedy. The whole state lies now at stake, and our distempers are grown to that height as they will not much longer attend our expected supplies. We are brought so low as unless succours presently arrive we must here undoubtedly perish, and your majesty be put to a far greater expense of blood and treasure for the recovery of this kingdom than your royal progenitors were in the first conquest of it. The whole province of Ulster is entirely in possession of the rebels, except that part which is possessed by the Scots, who stand upon their guard, and for want of arms and commanders dare not adventure to attempt anything of moment against the rebels. A great part of Connaught is likewise at their devotion, and the whole province of Munster not only wavering but already hath in several

parts made a defection, and now, to render our condition desperate here in the city, the Lords of the Pale stand upon their guard, have entertained several parlies with the rebels of Ulster, and all their tenants and followers inhabiting in these counties are not only large contributors to their subsistence here, but do themselves rob and despoil the English up to the very gates of Dublin.

'But that which makes this rebellion more dangerous and formidable, and indeed makes it differ from all others that have heretofore happened in this kingdom, is that they have profaned your sacred name, and infused into the belief of the people that what they do is not only by your majesty's avowment, but by commission under your majesty's signature. Besides, the cause of their taking arms they pretend to be religion, wherewith their priests and Jesuits have with so great artifice and cunning entertained them, making them believe that the Romish religion was presently to be rooted out here, that horrid persecutions were now intended, and cruel massacres to be suddenly executed upon all professors of the same. By these and other delusions they have drawn together infinite multitudes of people, and caused them to take arms and an oath for the defence of their religion and the delivery



strong measures when the country was in the hands of bands of robbers, who were confessedly plundering the entire province. Every detail of that business, however, is preserved, and can be traced to the minutest

of the kingdom from the present government, which they resolve no longer to endure, but will, as they say, under your majesty, have a governor designed unto them out of their own nation.

‘Thus enraged and armed by these pretences, they march on, furiously destroying all the English, sparing neither sex nor age, throughout the kingdom, most barbarously murdering them, and that with greater cruelty than ever was yet used among Turks and infidels. I will not trouble your majesty with the sad story of our miseries here. *Many thousands of our nation are already perished* under their cruel hands, and the poor remainder of them go up and down desolate, naked, and most miserably afflicted with cold and hunger, all inns and other places in the country being prohibited, under deep penalties, to entertain or give any kind of relief to them, so as here we sit, wearied with the most lamentable complaints and fearful outcries of our poor distressed countrymen, and have no means to afford them any redress, nor indeed any great hopes long to preserve ourselves and this city from the fury of the rebels who threaten us with ruin and desolation.

‘The Lords Justices have not

been wanting to use the best means they could for the preservation of this place, not only by the most earnest representations of their condition here, and the impossibility to subsist without succour out of England, but by raising of men and gathering together such forces as the place could afford. Yet, notwithstanding all their endeavours (besides the 2000 men under Sir H. Tichborne now besieged in Drogheda), they are not able to bring into the field above 3000 men, both horse and foot, most of them citizens, many of them Irish, who, we have just cause to suspect, will, on the first encounter, desert and carry over their arms to the rebels.

‘In this position we daily expect to be besieged by strange multitudes of people, who have already come from all parts, and have on all sides encompassed this city, which is of itself no ways defensible; and if it were, yet they will hinder our markets and so bring a famine among us, which at this present they may the more easily effect by reason that many thousands of the despoiled English women and children are now come in to take sanctuary among us.’—‘Sir John Temple to the King, December 12, 1641.

*MSS. Record Office.*

fibre of it. The date of the affair at Island Magee was not November but January. Alaster Macdonnell had destroyed some English families in their beds at Kilrea. Seventy or eighty old men, women, and children, had been killed on the road by the same party near Ballintoy and Oldstown. On the Sunday following, January 9, a party of the expelled farmers, maddened by their losses, accompanied by a few soldiers from Carrickfergus, did slay in revenge thirty Catholics at Island Magee.<sup>1</sup> Thirty persons put to death, in the frenzy of provoked rage, on January 9, 1642, when the cries of perishing men and women were going up from every corner of Ulster, have been converted into three thousand at the beginning of November in the preceding year, and the crimes of the Irish represented as the self-defence of innocent victims defending themselves against unprovoked assassination. When will the Irish Catholics, when will the Roman Catholics, learn that wounds will never heal which are skinned with lying? Not till they have done penance, all of them, by frank confession and humiliation—the Irish for their crimes in their own island—the Catholics generally for their yet greater crimes throughout the civilized world—can the past be forgotten, and their lawful claims on the conscience of mankind be equitably considered.

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<sup>1</sup> The particulars are given exactly by Dr. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, vol. i. pp. 326, 327. The Catholics, it is to be admitted, are able to quote their story from Lord Clarendon. Lord Clarendon's imagination was capable of a wide flight, when a stone could be thrown at Presbyterians.

Forbearance did not last beyond a few days, if so long. Rallying from their first surprise, the Protestants gathered into bodies and made fight; and from that moment the conduct of the rebellion fell entirely into the hands of the most violent. Charlemont Castle, the strongest fortress in Ulster, was surprised on the fatal 23rd of October by Sir Phelim O'Neil. Lord Caulfield, who was taken there, was afterwards murdered.<sup>1</sup> A deed being found in the muniment room with the great seal upon it, Sir Phelim forged a commission from Charles, attached the seal, and went forward in the King's name. In a fortnight, with the exception of the few places mentioned as having escaped, every town, village, fort, or private house belonging to a Protestant in the six counties and in Down and Monaghan was in the hands of the insurgents, while the roads were covered with bands of miserable fugitives dragging themselves either towards Dublin, or Derry, or Carrickfergus, pursued and harassed as they went by bands of wretches, who were hunting them like starved jackals. Murder when the spirit of it has gone abroad becomes a passion; and man grows more ferocious than a beast of prey. Savage creatures of both sexes, yelping in chorus, and brandishing their skenes; boys practising their

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<sup>1</sup> 'Not by Sir Phelim's order, or with his consent. Lord Caulfield and his family were carried as prisoners to Sir Phelim O'Neil's house, and Lord Caulfield, in Sir Phelim's absence, was shot dead by his foster

brother.' 'Sir Phelim on his return,' says a contemporary writer, 'caused the foster brother and two or three villains more to be hanged.' — *Relation touching the Present State of Ireland*. London 1641.

young hands in stabbing and torturing the English children—these were the scenes which were witnessed daily through all parts of Ulster. The fury extended even to the farm-stock, and sheep and oxen were slaughtered, not for food, but in the blindness of rage. The distinction between Scots and English soon vanished. Religion was made the new dividing line, and the one crime was to be a Protestant. The escorts proved in most cases but gangs of assassins. In the wildest of remembered winters the shivering fugitives were goaded along the highways stark naked and foodless. If some, happier than the rest, found a few rags to throw about them, they were torn instantly away. If others, in natural modesty, twisted straw ropes round their waists, the straw was set on fire. When the tired little ones dropped behind, the escort lashed the parents forward, and the children were left to die. One witness, Adam Clover, of Slonory in Cavan, swore that he saw a woman who had been thus deserted, set upon by three Irish women, who stripped her naked in frost and snow. She fell in labour under their hands, and she and her child died.<sup>1</sup> Many were buried alive. Those who died

<sup>1</sup> Temple.

Robert Maxwell, Archdeacon of Down, afterwards Bishop of Kilmore, deposed that, by Sir Phelim's order, they murdered his brother James Maxwell. His wife, Grizzel Maxwell, being in labour, they stripped her naked, and drew her an arrow flight to the Blackwater and

drowned her. They cut a collop out of each buttock of Mr. Watson, and afterwards roasted him alive. They threw Mr. Starkey and his two daughters into a turf pit. They cut the flesh off living English cattle to make them die in torment. Maxwell knew a boy that killed fifteen men with a skene,

first were never buried, but were left to be devoured by dogs, and rats, and swine. Some were driven into rivers and drowned, some hanged, some mutilated, some ripped with knives. The priests told the people 'that the Protestants were worse than dogs, they were devils and served the devil, and the killing of them was a meritorious act.' One wretch stabbed a woman with a baby in her arms, and left the infant in mockery on its dead mother's breast, bidding it 'Suck, English bastard.' The insurgents swore in their madness they would not leave English man, woman, or child alive in Ireland. They flung babies into boiling pots, or tossed them into the ditches to the pigs. They put out grown men's eyes, turned them adrift to wander, and starved them to death. Two cowboys boasted of having murdered thirty women and children, and a lad was heard swearing that his arm was so tired with killing, that he could scarce lift his hand above his head.

The towns could not hold the numbers which flocked into them, and the plague came to add to the general horrors. In Coleraine, in four months, six thousand were said to have died of the pestilence alone.<sup>1</sup> The scenes in Dublin were still more frightful. Sir John Temple was so affected by the terrible spectacle

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they being disarmed, and most of them in the stocks. . . A woman killed seven men and women in a morning, and the Popish children used to kill the Protestant children with lath swords well sharpened,

&c. &c.—*Hibernia Anglicana*, Appendix, p. 10.

<sup>1</sup> Reid. But in all these cases numbers must be received with caution.

passing under his own eyes, that his language in describing it rises into a tone of profound and tragic solemnity.

‘Multitudes of English daily came up in troops, stripped and miserably despoiled; persons of good rank and quality, covered over with old rags, and even without any covering but a little twisted straw to hide their nakedness. Wives came lamenting the murder of their husbands, mothers of their children barbarously destroyed before their faces. Some, overwearièd with long travel and so surbated,<sup>1</sup> came creeping on their knees; others, frozen with cold, ready to die in the streets. The city was thus filled with most lamentable spectacles of sorrow, which in great numbers wandered up and down in all parts, desolate, forsaken, having no place to lay their heads on, no clothing to cover them, no food to fill their hungry bellies. The Popish inhabitants refused to minister the least comfort to them, so as those sad creatures appeared like ghosts in every street. Barns, stables, and outhouses were filled with them, yet many lay in the open streets, and there miserably perished. The churches were the common receptacles of the meaner sort of them, who stood there in most doleful posture, as objects of charity, in so great multitude as there was scarce passage with them. Those of better quality, who could not pass themselves to be common beggars, crept into private places; and some that had not private friends wasted silently away and died

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The feet too bruised for walking.

without noise. So bitter was the remembrance of their former condition, and so insupportable the burden of their present calamity to many of them as they refused to be comforted. I have known some that lay almost naked, and having clothes sent, laid them by, refusing to put them on; others that would not stir to fetch themselves food, though they knew where it stood ready for them, but they continued to lie nastily in their own rags, and even in their own dung; and so, worn out with the misery of the journey and cruel usage, having their spirits bent, their bodies wasted, and their senses failing, lay here pitifully languishing; and soon after they had recovered this town, very many of them died, leaving their bodies as monuments of the most inhuman cruelties used towards them.<sup>1</sup>

The circumstantial minuteness of the picture is itself a guarantee of its fidelity. Far the larger portion of these miserable people died. The Dublin churchyards could not hold the multitudes that were crowding into them, and two large fields were enclosed as cemeteries before the forlorn wretches could find rest even for their bones.

Of the numbers that perished it is rash to offer so much as a conjecture. In the midst of excitement so terrible, extreme exaggeration was inevitable, and the accounts were more than usually hard to check, because the Catholics in their first triumph were as eager to make the most of their success as the Protestants to magnify their calamity. In the first horror it was

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<sup>1</sup> Temple, pp. 93, 94.

said, that 200,000 persons had perished in six months. For these enormous figures the Catholic priests were responsible. They returned the numbers of the killed in their several parishes up to March 1642, as 154,000.<sup>1</sup> To these may have been conjecturally added the crowds who died of exposure, want, or the plague, in Dublin and the other towns. Sir John Temple considered that 150,000 perished in two months, and 300,000 in two years. At the trial of Lord Maguyre, the figures were sworn at 152,000. Such guesses, for they could have been little more, prove only that in the presence of occurrences exceptionally horrible the balance of reason was overturned. Clarendon, on cooler reflection, reduced the number to 40,000. Sir William Petty, followed by Carte, to 37,000. Even these figures will seem too large when it is remembered how appalling is the impression created by the slaughter in cold blood of innocent unresisting people, how little rage and terror can be depended on for cool observation, and how inevitably the murdered were confounded afterwards with the enormous multitudes which indisputably perished in the civil war which followed. The evidence proves no more than that atrocities had been committed on a scale too vast to be exactly comprehended, while the judgment was

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<sup>1</sup> 'They murdered, up to the end of March last, of men, women, and children, 154,000, as is acknowledged by the priests appointed to collect the numbers.'—'The Lords Justices and Council to the King, March 16, 1643.' *Hibernia Anglicana*, Appendix, p. 4. The same number is mentioned by the Bishop of Kilmore as accepted in Sir Phe-  
lim's camp.—*Ibid.* p. 10.



still further confounded by the fiendish malignity of the details.<sup>1</sup>

The confused and furious struggle that ensued would require a separate history.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the

<sup>1</sup> A moderate and possible estimate of the number of those who were killed in the first two months of the rebellion is contained in '*A True and Credible Relation of the Massacre of the English Protestants in Ireland*;' by a gentleman who was eyewitness of most of the passages which he describes; who was forced, with his wife, to abandon house, estate, and country, for fear of the rebels, and arrived in London January 15, 1642.' Printed: London, 1642.

This writer says:—

'They have murdered and starved to death of the English in the Province of Ulster and other provinces, of men, women, and children, above 20,000. They have stripped ladies and gentlewomen, virgins and babes, old and young, naked as ever they were born, turning them into the open fields. Many hundreds have been found dead in ditches with cold and want of food and raiment. As for the Protestant ministers, they hang them up, then cut off their heads, afterwards quarter them, and then dismember them, stopping their mouths therewith. Many of their wives they have ravished in their sight before the multitude, stripping them naked to the view of their wicked companions, taunting and mocking

them with reproachful words, sending them away in such shameless manner, that most of them have died for grief.

'The priests and Jesuits commonly anoint the rebels with their sacrament of the unction before they go to murder and rob, assuring them for their meritorious service, if they chance to be killed, they shall escape purgatory and go to heaven immediately. . . . Five hundred English at Belturbet were stripped naked and turned out in the bitter cold, without a single rag to cover them. . . . They report and allege that religion is the cause of this war; but that is false, *for they have had too much liberty and freedom of conscience in Ireland, and that hath made them rebel.*'

<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1642 the King himself spoke of going over, uneasy perhaps at the terrible results of his correspondence with Antrim and Ormond. The Long Parliament declined to trust him. Sir John Temple, on April 25, when the King's coming was still talked of, wrote to some one, it is uncertain who:—

'If his majesty hold his resolution to come over to this kingdom to suppress the rebellion, and the Parliament consent to it, I hope he will come so well furnished with men and money as we shall go on

present work demands no more than the briefest sketch of the leading incidents. It is almost enough to say, that the blood spilt in the winter of 1641-2 was not washed out till, according to the elaborate computation of Sir William Petty,<sup>1</sup> out of an entire population of a million and a half, more than half a million had, by sword, famine, and pestilence, been miserably destroyed.

The conspiracy had spread over the island, and the southern provinces soon followed suit with Ulster. There was no second surprise, and scanty as they were in number, the Protestants were not long in making the insurgents feel that their game was not yet won. Wicklow and Wexford broke out in November. The expelled colonists in Dublin, burning for revenge, were drilled and armed; Sir Charles Coote, of Castle Coote, a veteran from the siege of Kinsale, led a few hundreds of them into the Wicklow mountains, and made free use there of shot and halter. But want of means

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gloriously to finish the work. I must not impart to you my own private thoughts at this distance; yet let me tell you that I cannot but with much regret consider how fatal this kingdom has been to all the kings of England that have set their foot within the isle. I wish that and many other particulars of far higher consequence may be seriously laid to heart before his majesty fix upon this journey. . . . . If our forces were come I am persuaded we should have a sudden end of the

war. The destruction of the rebels now certainly draws near. They are of the devil, and, like him, rage most furiously towards their latter end. They now exceed themselves in the barbarous cruelty they exercise upon the English. The Lord, I hope, will be pleased to put an end to them.'—*MSS. Ireland*, Record Office.

Temple thought the rebellion was near its end in April, 1642; it had still ten years to continue.

<sup>1</sup> *Political Arithmetic of Ireland.*

pinioned the Lord Justices to Dublin and the immediate neighbourhood. The Lords of the Pale  
 1642 made Coote's severities an excuse for pretending to believe that there was to be a massacre of the Catholics. They too joined the insurrection; and the whole country was in flame from Dunluce to Cape Clear.<sup>1</sup>

In England the effect was terrible. The bitterest invectives of the Puritans against the scarlet woman and her maintainers seemed justified by this new St. Bartholomew. Shocked at the catastrophe which he had assisted in forwarding, and to clear himself of suspicion of complicity, the King made over to the Long Parliament the entire management of Ireland. A few companies of soldiers were sent across at once. To raise a more sufficient force, two million acres and a half of the rebels' lands were declared forfeited, with Charles's consent, and were offered at easy rates to adventurers who were willing to advance money on the security of these estates. The bonds were taken up; an army was raised and sent to Bristol under Lord Wharton, to be transported to Dublin. Unhappily the war broke out in England before they could sail.

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<sup>1</sup> 'This county, the least disloyal in Ireland, is in general revolt; the English most miserable, fallen from plenty on a sudden to so much poverty that they own nothing. Every Irishman now declares himself a rebel, and only Kinsale, Cork, and Youghal, kept in awe by the castles, stand out for the King. There was a meeting on Tuesday last of the chief men of these parts, most of which pretended to be good subjects. They have all taken oaths to extirpate the English. There is very little quarter given on either side, and nothing to be expected but destruction.' 'Sir H. Stradling to Sir John Pennington, from Kinsale, March 6.' *MSS. Record Office.*

The troops were detained for home service, and seven years passed before the Long Parliament was again in a position to pay effective attention to Ireland.

Lord Ormond meanwhile commanded there for the King; and Ormond's own endeavour was not to punish the massacre, but to veil it, make peace with the Irish, and to renew the scheme which Sir Phelim's haste had marred.

Infinite and intricate negotiations followed. The English Parliament being occupied with fighting the King, the Scots sent a force (England providing the money) under General Monro, which gradually drove the rebels out of Ulster. Monro, declining to take orders from Ormond, contented himself with holding the ground which he had gained. The Catholics, meanwhile, established a council at Kilkenny, and undertook in form the government of Ireland, and, with the Pope's blessing on their gallant efforts, 'to extirpate and root out from among them the workers of iniquity.'<sup>1</sup>

To this Kilkenny Council Ormond's efforts were now addressed. Could Ormond but come to an understanding with them, out of their united forces he might lead an army to England, which might dictate terms to the Parliament. Religion was of course the difficulty. The Irish Council demanded the restoration of the Catholic Church to its pre-reformation splendour and privileges. The King, though ready to promise unlimited toleration, could go no further, without

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<sup>1</sup> *Hibernia Anglicana*, Appendix, p. 15.

alienating hopelessly such friends as remained to him in England.

The Irish Catholic Peers understood and allowed for the difficulty, and were ready to meet Ormond half way. The Clergy, standing on Providence and Divine right, would abate no tittle of their pretensions; and the

<sup>1644</sup> Pope, to sustain their resolution, sent them a Legate, John Baptiste Rinuccini, Prince Archbishop of Firmo, with arms, powder, Spanish dollars, and a supply of Italian priests. The Legate and his chaplains ran a near chance of swinging at an English yard arm. Captain Plunket, in a ship belonging to the Parliament, chased him up the Kenmare river, and would have caught him but for the breaking out of an accidental fire. He landed safe and was received with becoming honour at Kilkenny. But the differences remained which had shown themselves at the meeting at the Westmeath abbey. The Lords and Gentlemen who, though Catholic, were of English blood or breeding, were for peace with the King, and the Legate would have no peace till the Church had her own again, threatening, if the Council were obstinate, to take the bishops to Italy with him and leave the kingdom unshepherded. The King's double dealing came to the Legate's help. More eager than ever, as the war went against him, for a peace which would bring him the swords of the Irish Catholics, he had empowered Ormond to treat on conditions which he could acknowledge to the world; and at the same time he had sent the Earl of Glamorgan with other

conditions, pledging himself, if only the secret were kept till the war was over, to grant all that the clergy demanded. He had gone so far as himself to write to the Legate, promising to confirm whatever Glamorgan and he might agree upon, and thus fortified the Archbishop of course insisted on the most complete concessions.

The secret was betrayed. The Glamorgan articles were published, and Charles was forced to deny their authenticity. The question became thus hopelessly entangled. Two Catholic parties were formed, following the lines of division which had ex-<sup>1647</sup>isted from the first. The native Irish went with the Legate and the priests, and had their own army, under Owen Roe O'Neil, who came over as he promised. The Council of Kilkenny had another army, composed of the Pale Lords and their retainers, still at issue with the Legate, but staggering under threats of excommunication. Ormond maintained himself with difficulty in Dublin, supported by the Church of England loyalists. Ulster was garrisoned by Monro and the Scots. To these four parties and their various forces, whom the miserable country was compelled to support, a fifth was now to be added.

The war in England being ended by the surrender of the King, Ormond found his own position no longer tenable. The Pale Lords were too weak for the Legate and the Irish, and concluding honourably that it was better that Ireland should be governed by the Parliament than fall into the hands of the faction on which

the guilt lay of the murders of 1641, Ormond surrendered Dublin to the Parliament's officers, and left the kingdom. Colonel Michael Jones brought strong reinforcements in the spring of 1647, reorganized the remnant of troops which Ormond left behind him, and, after trying his strength with General Preston and the Kilkenny army in two slight skirmishes, caught Preston at advantage at Dungan Hill, hunted his whole army into a bog, and cut it to pieces. The defeat cleared the confusion. The Kilkenny Council broke with the native Irish. The Legate withdrew to Owen Roe, preaching damnation to the traitors who were deserting the cause of Christ; and soon after he shook the dust from his feet and returned to Italy.

1649 Ormond came back at the invitation of the Council; the Catholic Lords, leaving Owen Roe to his own devices, made a final peace with Ormond as the king's representative, and prepared to act against the common enemy.

Events in England appeared to favour their prospects. The ascendancy of Cromwell and the army created the same agitation among the Ulster Presbyterians as it had caused in England and Scotland. They failed to see that Cromwell, and Cromwell only, could give effect to what was true in Presbyterianism;—that they were fighting for the husk, while the substance was with the Independents and the Lord General; and, on the news of the King's execution, half Monro's soldiers declared openly for Charles the Second. Prince Rupert landed at Kinsale, and the

broken remains of the Cavaliers came over in thousands to assist in saving Ireland. The peace had come too late to save Charles; but it seemed for a moment as if a coalition of enemies might revenge his death, and that Catholic, Royalist, and Presbyterian, united in common loyalty to the name of a king, would, in Ireland at least, carry all before it. Ormond, with Lord Taafe and the Earl of Castlehaven,<sup>1</sup> led eighteen thousand men into the Pale, seized Drogheda and Dundalk, and proceeded to besiege Jones in Dublin. Ormond was in haste, for he knew that he had no time to spare. Cromwell, when his work in England was over, had accepted the Irish command, and was preparing to put a close at last on these scenes of disgrace and shame.

Owen Roe and his Irish still held aloof. With the Kilkenny Lords his quarrel was irreconcilable; and, forming a clearer estimate than others of Cromwell's strength, he endeavoured to make a separate peace for himself. It was a crisis in which English statesmen cared more for principle than policy. At other times, before and since, such a chance of dividing Irish interests would have been snatched at. But the stern answer came back from the Parliament, 'that the innocent blood which had been shed in Ireland was too fresh in their memory, and that House did detest and abhor the thought of closing with any party of Popish rebels.' To an ear which could still hear, these words were as the doom of the judgment day.

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<sup>1</sup> 1649.



Owen Roe perhaps felt it so, for he soon after died, and was spared the sight of the vengeance now coming for the atrocities of his kinsman, which none had condemned more bitterly than he. Ormond received before Dublin the same lesson in another form, though he was less quick in perceiving its meaning. A few regiments of the approaching English army having arrived before the rest, Colonel Jones, thus strengthened, sallied out on Ormond's camp at Rathmines,<sup>1</sup> defeated him, took his artillery with two thousand prisoners, and utterly routed him. The siege was raised in haste. A fortnight later Cromwell had landed.

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<sup>1</sup> August 2, 1649.

## SECTION V.

JUSTICE to Ireland—justice in all times and places—means protection and encouragement to the industrious, the honest, and the worthy; repression and punishment of the idle and the mutinous, who prefer to live at their own wills on the spoil of other men's labours.

The 'earth-tillers' of Ireland had, from immemorial time, been the drudges and the victims of those of their own race who, thinking it scorn to work, had been supported by others' toil—who, calling themselves rulers, were in no point morally superior to their own wolves, and had nevertheless usurped to themselves the name of the Irish nation, claimed before the world to be the representatives of their countrymen, and, while clamouring over their wrongs, had meant only at bottom that they were deprived of their own power to oppress.

It is in human nature, and beyond others in the Irish form of human nature, that men should obey and honour their born superiors, however worthless those superiors may be. Yet there is in the Irishman's nature also a special appreciation of just dealing; and though the Celtic peasant is said to prefer the tyranny of his own chiefs to the orderly rule of the stranger, the experiment which of these two feelings is the stronger has as yet scarcely had fair trial.

Justice, in the true sense, has been the last expedient to which England has had recourse in her efforts to harmonize her relations with her wayward dependency. She has taken those who have made the loudest noise at their own estimation. She has regarded the patriot orator, the rebel, and the assassin as the representatives of Ireland. She has thought alternately, and with equal unsuccess, how she can coerce or conciliate those who give her trouble. How to encourage industry and honest labour, how to prevent oppression and save the working peasant from being pillaged by violence or unjust law, she has rarely troubled herself to consider.

For the first and last time a government was about to be established in Ireland which, for the ten years that it endured, was to administer the country in the sole interests of honest labour—where the toiler was to reap the fruit of his toil, the idle and the vicious to reap the fruit of their devices. The perverseness of tradition has made these years a byword of tyranny. They form the blackest page in Irish annals. The victims of the Cromwellian settlement have had the making of the history, and English carelessness and prejudice have given them possession of the field. But the last word is not yet spoken, and the Irish poor will learn one day who have been their true friends—they have not been troubled with very many.

Before Government could begin, however, Ireland had first to be conquered; and had Irish patriotism been more than a name, the conquest would have

been impossible. The Confederate Catholics had represented themselves in one of their first programmes as able, if united, to bring 200,000 men into the field. Their factions were at last over. Owen Roe's followers, seeing no escape open to them, made up their quarrel with the Kilkenny lords. All the force which Catholic and Anglo-Catholic Ireland could provide was at Ormond's disposition; and the Rathmines defeat had drawn closer the discordant parties. The Ulster Scots had been driven into frenzy by the execution of Charles the First. The English soldiers in Ormond's army were some of the very best and most determined that the Royalist party could furnish. The Parliament held not an inch of land beyond Dublin and Londonderry walls, and an invading force would have to carry its supplies with it through every mile of its advance. With these prospects, Oliver Cromwell landed on Dublin quay on 15th August, 1649. The force which he brought with him was small—nine thousand infantry and four thousand horse. They were not soldiers merely: they had entered the service on the understanding, that their wages were to be Irish lands. They were to take the place of those among the native proprietors who by rebellion had forfeited their holdings. A vast military Protestant settlement, extended over the whole fertile parts of the island, was to terminate the Irish difficulty at once and for ever. After stepping on shore, the Lord General made a speech to the remnant of the ruined colonists. As God, he said,

had brought him thither in safety, he doubted not by Divine Providence to restore them to their just liberties and properties. To all who were zealous for the establishing of truth and peace, to all who would assist in restoring the bleeding Ireland to its former tranquillity, he promised favour and protection from the Parliament. General Jones's troops had fallen already into Irish habits. Wages, as usual, had been irregularly paid, and the soldiers, according to immemorial custom, had paid themselves by taking what they wanted. Cromwell's first act was to publish, as a standing army order, that no violence should be done to any persons not in arms with the enemy; that soldiers taking goods without payment should be punished according to the articles of war; and that officers who allowed the rule to be disobeyed should forfeit their commissions.<sup>1</sup>

A fortnight sufficed for preparation. Ormond's army lay in strong positions in and about Trim. Several of the best regiments, almost wholly English, had been thrown into Drogheda under Sir Arthur Ashton, late governor of Reading. The safe keeping of an open port was of great consequence. The best skill in the Royalist service had been employed to make the defences impregnable; and Sir Arthur assured Ormond that he need be under no uneasiness. Though Drogheda would naturally be Cromwell's first object, Ashton undertook to hold it against any force which could be brought against him till the winter rains

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<sup>1</sup> *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, Carlyle, vol. ii. p. 161.

compelled the raising of the siege ; and he was a man who might be relied on to make good his words.

On 3rd September Cromwell appeared under the walls. He waited a week, expecting that Ormond would attempt a diversion, and give him an opportunity of forcing an action in the field. Ormond, trusting to Ashton's promise, did not move. The English guns were placed in position. On Monday, 9th September, they opened fire, and a summons was sent in to the governor to deliver over the town to the Parliament. No answer was returned ; the guns having broken a way, on Tuesday, at five in the afternoon the Parliament troops advanced to the assault. The garrison fought with extreme courage. Twice after forcing their way into the town the storming parties were beaten back through the breach. The third time, as the light was waning, Cromwell led them up in person, forced Ashton upon his inner lines, stormed those lines in turn, and before night fell was master of Drogheda. The summons to surrender having been refused, the order was to put every man found in arms to the sword. It was almost literally obeyed. A few score held out till the morning in two detached towers, and then surrendered at discretion. Every tenth man was shot ; the remainder were sent to the penal settlement at Barbadoes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Irish histories say that there was an indiscriminate massacre of men, women, and children. Cromwell's own account mentions only men in arms and priests who, as having been the instigators of the worst crimes, were held less innocent than those who had committed them. It is possible that, in such a scene, women and children may

‘I am persuaded,’ wrote Cromwell, ‘that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood, and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future, which are the satisfactory grounds to such actions, which otherwise could not but work remorse and regret.’<sup>1</sup>

have been accidentally killed ; but there is no evidence of it from an eyewitness, and only general rumours and reports at second hand. Of authentic evidence, in addition to Cromwell’s own letters, two documents, one of them from a Royalist, disprove conclusively the story of a general massacre.

A printed official list of officers and soldiers slain at the storming of Drogheda, supplied to the Parliament, brings the number to nearly 3000, besides *many inhabitants*.

The citizens in these instances fought by the side of the troops, and shared their fate.

A letter from an eyewitness to the Marquis of Newcastle says:—

Ashton doubted not of finding Cromwell play a while, as certainly he had done had not Colonel Wales’ regiment, after the enemy had been twice repulsed, on the unfortunate loss of their colonel in the third assault, been so dismayed as to listen before they had need to the enemy offering them quarter, and admitted them on those terms, thereby betraying themselves and their fellow-countrymen to the slaughter ; for Cromwell, being master of the town, and told by Jones that he

had now in his hands the flower of the Irish army, gave orders to *have all that were in arms* put to the sword. There were butchered near 3000 soldiers, and those reputed the best the kingdom afforded, in whose fate there is sadly observable how great a number of them were guilty of the breach of the unlucky agreement made two years before, between Lord Clanrickarde and the Leinster army, at Sir Nicholas Whyte’s castle of Leixleap, several of those that survived having perished since, and few or none escaped some remarkable affliction. The massacre of Drogheda lopped off a principal limb of my lord’s army.’

For the treachery at Leixleap, see Borlase’s *History of the Irish Rebellion*, p. 171.

Beling, mentioning the storming of Drogheda, says that the whole number of soldiers and citizens slain amounted to about 4000. The soldiers and officers killed were about 3000 ; so that, if Beling’s account is accurate, and it will certainly not be understated, the so-called wholesale massacre is reduced within narrow dimensions.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 177.

History, ever eloquent in favour of the losing cause—history, which has permitted the massacre of 1641 to be forgotten, or palliated, or denied—has held up the storming of Drogheda to eternal execration. The English, though ready, when confronted with similar problems in India or elsewhere, to use the same remedy on lighter provocation, yet make a compromise with their consciences, and, when the severity is over, and the fruits of it in peace and order are gathered and enjoyed, agree usually or always to exclaim against the needless cruelty. The Irish insurrection had cost nearly six hundred thousand lives. Those who had suffered most had been those for whom pity was most deserved—the weak, the sick, and the helpless. It was necessary to end such horrible scenes, and to end them swiftly; for every hour's delay only prolonged the misery. The Drogheda garrison suffered no more than the letter of the laws of war permitted; and the wisdom of making a severe example was signally justified in its consequences. Happier far would it have been for Ireland if, forty years later, there had been a second Cromwell before Limerick.

Ormond's army fell back as if stunned. Dundalk and Trim, taught by frightful experience, surrendered at the first summons. Wexford was the most important position held by the Irish on the eastern coast after Drogheda. Wexford pirates harassed the communication with England. The Catholic inhabitants had lately distinguished themselves by acts of characteristic ferocity. They had filled a hulk with



Protestant prisoners, and had sunk it in the harbour there. They had imprisoned others in a Catholic chapel and starved them to death.<sup>1</sup>

To Wexford Cromwell next addressed himself. On the way he had occasion to show that his orders against pillage were meant in earnest. Two soldiers stole a fowl from a peasant's cabin, and were at once hanged. Arrived before the gates he sent a summons as before, with a promise that if the place was given up at once the lives of everyone should be spared. Not silent, like Ashton, but scarcely less imprudent, the governor demanded security for lands and goods, the maintenance in authority of the Catholic bishop, protection for the religious houses, and generally all privileges which Catholics could desire. Cromwell's stern reply was an order to surrender in an hour. The hour passed; the gates were not opened. The town was stormed, and the garrison once more was put to the sword.<sup>2</sup>

'I could wish, for their own good,' said Cromwell, 'they had been more moderate in the terms which they demanded.'

These two terrible blows virtually ended the war. Man for man, in a good cause, and under discipline and command, the Irish were a match for any soldiers in the world. Powerless only at home, disabled by the consciousness of wrong-doing, like law-breakers

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<sup>1</sup> *Letters and Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 197. | killed in the chapel in which the Protestants had been murdered.—

<sup>2</sup> One or more of the priests was | *Letters and Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 197.

taken by the policeman, they were first bewildered, then, as they collected their senses, they recognized that they had to do with a person whom they neither dared encounter in the field, nor could deceive or trifle with in the game of words. Rebellion was played out, and they had to choose between submission and death. General Taafe<sup>1</sup> attempted, before surrendering Ross, to stipulate for liberty of conscience. 'I meddle with no man's conscience,' Cromwell answered; 'but if by liberty of conscience you mean liberty to exercise the mass, I judge it best to use plain dealing, and let you know that, where the Parliament of England has power, that will not be allowed.'<sup>2</sup> General Taafe had to accept the sentence, and go his way. The mass, as a superstitious form of religious ritual, it might be lawful, and even right to tolerate. The mass, as a symbol of a Church whose supreme pontiff<sup>3</sup> had applauded the insurrection of 1641, as his predecessor had applauded the massacre of St. Bartholomew, it was not legitimate only, but necessary, to interdict, till the adherents of it retired from a position which was intolerable in civilized society.

The English of Munster, who had hitherto held with Ormond, seeing now how events were turning, 1650  
with one consent went over to the conqueror.

Sir Charles Coote, in December, reduced the northern Presbyterians. The Catholic bishops, in assumed

<sup>1</sup> Lucas, Lord Taafe's second son. His brother, a priest, had been killed at Drogheda.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters and Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> *Hibernia Anglicana*, App. D. 15.

horror of rebellion, continued to shriek against 'the malignant murder of King Charles.' Emer MacMahon, Bishop of Clogher, joint conspirator with Sir Phelim O'Neil, made head in Coleraine. Coote set upon him, defeated and took him prisoner, and the next day hung him, and set his head on the gates of Londonderry. Cromwell himself, after breaking the neck of the coalition, went back to England; but others could now finish the meal which Cromwell had carved. Ormond a second time left Ireland. Prince Rupert had gone long before. Clanrickarde still struggled feebly; but those who were loudest for fighting to the last were manœuvring secretly to make private terms for themselves. 'The Irish,' said Castlehaven, 'are so false that nobody is to be trusted; either the husband or the wife are treating with the enemy, and in their camp.' The Duke of Lorraine was appealed to passionately for help in the name of the young King. The Duke answered coolly, 'that his majesty had nothing in Ireland to treat for.' In the spring of 1652, Galway, the last stronghold which the Irish held, capitulated to Coote. Ross Castle, on Killarney, continued defiant, and was thought impregnable; but Ludlow carried a vessel over the mountains in pieces, launched and armed it, and Ross gave in. Lord Muskerry and Lord Westmeath, who were in the mountains, laid down their arms, and all was over.

The remnant of the Ulster murderers who had survived the wars, remained to be brought to  
1652 late justice. A High Court of Justice, under

General Fleetwood, was held at Kilkenny, in the hall of the assembly, to try them. Sir Phelim O'Neil and two hundred others were convicted and executed. All the rest had been consumed in a war, the waste of life in which, compared with the population of the country exposed to its ravages, stands unparalleled in the annals of mankind.

## SECTION VI.

IRELAND was now a blank sheet of paper, on which  
 1652-60 the English Commonwealth might write what  
 characters they pleased. Owing to the double  
 character which the rebellion had assumed, there was  
 scarcely a Catholic landowner who had not, in one form  
 or other, exposed his property to confiscation. The  
 royalist English families who had gone with Ormond  
 were in no better condition; and it was neither reason-  
 able nor tolerable that the cost of restoring peace  
 should be thrown on the taxpayers of England. The  
 common sense of all nations declares, that those who  
 risk the game of insurrection shall pay the penalty  
 of failure, and the enormous misery created by civil  
 war renders the punishment of it imperative on the  
 conquerors. The generosity of motive, or the mis-  
 taken sense of duty, which may prompt men to take  
 arms against their government, exempts them from  
 the personal detestation which is the due of baser  
 criminals; but the character of those misleading influ-  
 ences makes severity more necessary, as a counter-  
 weight to imaginative seductions. No government  
 deserves to exist which permits those who have defied  
 its authority to suffer no worse consequences than dis-  
 appointment, and to remain with unimpaired means to  
 renew the struggle at another opportunity.

The character of landed tenures—it cannot be too

often repeated—renders forfeiture the appropriate retribution. Private ownership in land is permitted because Government cannot be omnipresent, and personal interest is found, on the whole, an adequate security that land so held shall be administered to the general advantage. But seeing that men are born into the world without their own wills, and, being in the world, they must live upon the earth's surface, or they cannot live at all, no individual, or set of individuals, can hold over land that personal and irresponsible right which is allowed them in things of less universal necessity. They may obtain estates by chase. They may receive them as rewards of service, or inherit them from their ancestors. But the possession, however acquired, carries with it honourable and inseparable consequences in the respect, the deference, or even positive obedience which the possessor receives from the dependants by whose hands those estates are cultivated, and with the privilege is involved the responsibility. To some extent at present—to a far greater extent two centuries ago—the owner of the soil was the master of the fortunes and the guide of the allegiance of his tenants. He was an officer of the commonwealth—the natural governor of tens, hundreds, or thousands of human beings committed to his charge. If he was false to his trust, the sovereign power resumed its rights, which it had never parted with; and either sold or gave his interest, and his authority along with it, to others who would better discharge the duties expected of them.

Times are changing, and such theories may be passing out of date. At best they could never be acted upon more than approximately. In violent convulsions however, when existing organizations are torn in pieces, principles form the only guide. The Irish proprietors had become intolerable. They were dismissed, and their room was supplied by better men.

It will be remembered that, in 1642, the English Parliament, in consequence of the dimensions which the rebellion had then assumed, confiscated between two and three million acres of Irish soil. Debenture bonds were issued payable in land when the country should be reconquered. Bonds for a million acres had been taken up, and money had been raised on them, for the troops sent to Ireland previous to Cromwell's arrival. Similar debentures were issued afterwards for Cromwell's own army, not thrown upon the market like the first, but given to the soldiers in lieu of their pay, and the time was come when all these engagements were to be redeemed. The intention was, that the men who conquered Ireland should remain to hold it. The country was to be occupied, in old Roman fashion, by military colonies.

The scheme, though admirable in conception, could only be executed imperfectly. Many of the soldiers, in want of money, had sold their bonds. Keen-eyed capitalists, like Dr. Petty, hung about the army, and the sale of debentures became a trade. The officers bought from the men, the men bought from one another. The thrifty and prudent kept their claims,

the improvident and careless were weeded out. Vast numbers, however, remained. Adventurers came from England to take the place of those who were unwilling to stay. There was a fair prospect that Munster and Leinster might be settled and occupied as completely as the six counties had been. The whole country was carefully surveyed; and a court was established to examine the claims, and assign to every bondholder his share.

The principles of the Cromwellian settlement were generally these. The surviving population was estimated by Dr. Petty at about 850,000, of whom 150,000 were English and Scots. Experience had shown too repeatedly that when the English and Irish were intermixed, the distinctive English character in a few generations was lost. To prevent a recurrence of a transformation so subtle and so dangerous, Cromwell determined to make Connaught into a second Wales. The Western province had a natural boundary in the Shannon. Beyond this deep and effectual barrier, the families of the chiefs, the leading members of the Irish race—the middle and upper classes, as we should call them, from whose ranks the worst elements of disorder arose—might receive an equivalent for the lands of which they were deprived. There living among themselves they might die out or multiply as their lot might be. A line of physical demarcation would then be drawn between the Teutonic and Celtic population. Ulster, Munster, and Leinster would be the exclusive possession of Protestant English and Protestant Scots,



reinforced, it might be, by Calvinist fugitives from the Continent. The Irish peasantry might be trusted to remain under their new masters, if the chiefs of their own blood were removed; and with peace, order, and good government, and protected from spoliation, they might be expected to conform, at no distant time, to the habits, language, and religion of their conquerors.

The 'Swordsmen,' those who had been out in the war, were offered the alternative of Connaught or exile. Some chose the first, the larger number chose the second, and went, with the most devoted of their followers, into the French, Spanish, and Austrian services. The Catholic priests were more sharply dealt with. They were declared, in a sweeping judgment, guilty of high treason, and ordered to depart. A thousand of them hastened away of themselves; but as many or more remained, and it was a question what to do with them. At first, such of them as did not remove of their own accord were put on board vessels bound for Spain. This proving no deterrent, they were sent to the Barbadoes settlement. Finally, when the numbers arrested were too great to be so provided for, they were removed to two islands in the Atlantic, the Isle of Arran and Inis Bofin, where cabins were built for them, and they were allowed sixpence a day for their maintenance.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I cannot pass over this part of my narrative without making my acknowledgments to Mr. Prendergast, to whose personal courtesy I am deeply indebted, and to whose

impartiality and candour in his		volume on the Cromwellian settle-
ment I can offer no higher praise		than by saying, that the perusal of
it has left on my mind an impression		

On these principles Ireland was laid out and re-settled by Cromwell's officers. In the apportionment of the claims the soldiers were asked whether their lands should be selected by authority for them, or divided by lot. They answered remarkably, 'that they would rather take a lot upon a barren mountain as from the Lord, than a portion in the most fruitful valley upon their own choice.' Both methods were adopted in the final decision. The regiments were kept together in bodies; the lot determined the situation of individuals. 'They were settled down regiment by regiment, troop by troop, company by company, almost on the lands they had conquered.'<sup>1</sup> The peasants remained under them in their natural homes, as their under-tenants, or farm servants. They built and planted, they drained and ploughed. They went to work with heart and will in the homes which they had earned; and, by the natural enchantment which gives to order and industry its immediate and admirable reward, the face of Ireland began, once more, to wear a look of quiet and prosperity.

The disorderly elements could not, at once and altogether, be removed. In inaccessible hiding-places—in the bogs and mountains, and still enormous forests—bands of outlaws who had escaped Connaught lurked, under the name of Tories, and continued a war of

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precisely opposite to that of Mr. Prendergast himself. He writes as an Irish patriot—I as an Englishman; but the difference between

us is, not on the facts, but on the opinion to be formed about them.

<sup>1</sup> Prendergast.

plunder and assassination.<sup>1</sup> Their extirpation was a tedious process. The leaders were identified, and outlawed by name, and, when they refused to give themselves up, a price was set upon their heads, which their own comrades were willing to earn. 'The Irish bring them in,' said Major Morgan. 'Brothers and cousins cut one another's throats.' It was a hateful method, yet, under the circumstances, an inevitable one. The colonists found themselves shot at in the woods and fields, and their farmsteads burnt over their heads. They used the readiest means of ridding themselves of enemies whom they regarded as no better than wild animals—wild animals, or even worse. Yet even these poor wretches scarcely deserve the sarcasm of their modern champion. 'No wonder they betrayed each other,' says Mr. Prendergast, 'when there was no longer any public cause to maintain.'

Such was the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland—unrelentingly severe on the authors of the chronic

<sup>1</sup> 'Accustomed,' says Mr. Prendergast, 'to their own submissive rural classes, who represented the defeated and subdued Saxons, the English expected that the Irish would submit. They little knew the hearts, full of the noblest fire, that beat under the poorest rags in Ireland.'

'Father Plunket,' Mr. Prendergast continues, 'a friar of English race,' was employed to persuade the people into quiet. 'He reported they would rather pull God out of his throne, or throw themselves

headlong into the sea, than become loyal to the crown of England.'

Such a state of feeling implies, no doubt, extraordinary ill-success on the part of the English in their task of governing Ireland. But anarchical insubordination is neither a noble quality in itself, nor is it ever successful in obtaining its ends. Hearts really 'full of the noblest fire,' when they cannot resist honourably, understand how to yield manfully. The road to freedom has never been found to lie through murder and incendiarism.

misery under which the island had so long lain paralyzed, infinitely favourable to her future prospects if the wound, at last cauterized, was never allowed to reopen. The owners of the soil had forfeited their rights, and were deprived of them. The religion out of which the worst of their crimes had originated was proscribed. These two things accomplished, Ireland was identified with England, and made a full participator in every advantage which England possessed. The separate Parliament—fruitful mother of so much mischief—was swept away. The Irish representatives came to Westminster, and the two countries were made one under Cromwell's administration. For the first and last time, the sole object of the English Government was to further, to the utmost possible degree, the advancement and prosperity of Irish industry. Even the expatriation to Connaught was conceived and carried out in no ill-will to those who were removed. 'No one,' says Clarendon, 'was exported who had not forfeited his life by rebellion; and it was the only way to save them from utter destruction: for such was their humour, that no English man or woman could stray a mile from their homes, but they were found murdered or stripped by the Irish, who lay in wait for them; so that the soldiers, if they had been allowed to remain in the country, would have risen upon them and totally destroyed them.'<sup>1</sup> There were plenty of persons, with Scripture arguments to back them, who advocated harsher work. 'The object,' said a Petition of Officers,

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<sup>1</sup> *Life of Clarendon*, vol. ii. p. 42.

‘is to prevent those of natural principles<sup>1</sup> from being one with the Irish as well in affinity as idolatry, as many thousands did who came over in Queen Elizabeth’s time, many of whom have had a hand in the murders and massacre. The order to the Israelites was to root out the heathen, lest they should cause them to forsake the Lord their God.’

The argument was apposite, and, as the event proved, not ill-grounded. But had Cromwell’s mode of government been persisted in—had there been no relapse into the old combination of iniquity and feebleness—events would have justified his resolution. He meant to rule Ireland for Ireland’s good, and all testimony agrees that Ireland never prospered as she prospered in the years of the Protectorate. He yielded nothing which he held essential. He allowed no penal statutes to be hung out, like scarecrows, to be a jest and mockery. The execution of the soldiers who stole the fowl was the symbol of the entire administration. He allowed no wrong-doing—no tyrannous oppression of the poor. Ireland’s interests were not sacrificed to England’s commercial jealousies. A prosperous woollen manufacture had been set on foot by James the First’s colonists. The British weaving interest took alarm, and Strafford, to please England and weaken Ireland, destroyed the trade.<sup>2</sup> Cromwell,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.* men without saving grace.

<sup>2</sup> ‘The Irish have wool in great quantities, and if they should manufacture it themselves the English would not only lose the profit

they made by indraping the Irish wool, and his majesty suffer in his customs, but it was feared the Irish would at last beat them out of the trade itself by underselling

recognizing no difference between the two countries, removed Strafford's obstructions, encouraged manufactures of every description, and gave entire liberty of trade.<sup>1</sup> The vice of Ireland was idleness; therefore, by all means, he stimulated industry. He abolished license, which the Irish miscalled liberty. He gave them instead the true liberty of law and wise direction; and he refused to sacrifice to English selfishness any single real benefit which it was in his power to confer.

*Unguentem pungit, pungentem Hibernicus ungit.* So said a Hibernian proverb. The worst means of governing the Irish is to give them their own way. In concession they see only fear, and those that fear them they hate and despise. Coercion succeeds better: they respect a master hand, though it be a hard and cruel one. But let authority be just as well as strong; give an Irishman a just master, and he will follow him to the world's end. Cromwell alone, of all Irish governors, understood this central principle of Irish management. He was gone before his administration could bear fruit in the feeling of the people, and history remembers only in him the avenger of the massacre. Yet, three years only after the settlement, General Fleetwood could write that the country was

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them. He considered further that, in reason of state, so long as the Irish did not indrape their own wool, they must of necessity fetch their clothing from England, and consequently in a sort depend on it

for their livelihood, and be disabled to cast off that dependence without nakedness to themselves and their children.'—Carte's *Ormond*.

<sup>1</sup> *Arthur Young on Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 178.

perfectly quiet; English people, if they would come over and buy land, would find Ireland little different from home; considering what the devastation had been, the 'plenty' that had sprung up was 'wonderful.'<sup>1</sup> The English of all sorts, Munster Royalists as well as the new settlers, submitted heartily and loyally. The Presbyterians remained unforgiving,<sup>2</sup> but they were left unmolested, by-and-by to reap as they had sown. The well-disposed among the Irish were reconciled sooner than might have been expected to a rule which gave them the reality of protection. Not a few of the old sort, who had escaped the weeding, were taking advantage of openings that offered themselves, and renting lands from settlers who wished to return to England.<sup>3</sup> Priests and dispossessed proprietors were hiding in disguise among the tribes, making mischief where they were able. But the peasantry seemed proof against seduction. 'The mere husbandmen,' wrote Dr. Jones<sup>1</sup> to Fleetwood, 'being now in very

<sup>1</sup> 'Fleetwood to Thurloe, June 18, 1655.'—*Thurloe Papers*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Our dissenting, but I hope godly, friends in this country carry such a jealousy with the present magistracy and ministry as I am weary of hoping for accommodation: everywhere they are unanimous and fixed in separating from us even to the ordinance of hearing the Word.'—'Nathaniel Brewster to Thurloe, October 12, 1656.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Here is one Marcus O'Decies, who has been a notable trooper and lieutenant of foot in the Irish army.

This man hath taken six or seven great townlands from several landlords, but lying together, whereby he hath many patrons to excuse his transportation. Those lands he hath planted all with strangers unknown in these parts. They behave themselves proudly, not like other churls, and under colour of ploughing are able to make up among them a reasonable good troop of horse.'—'Dr. H. Jones to Fleetwood, Dublin, January 23, 1656-7.'—*Thurloe Papers*.

good condition, will hardly be driven into action. What their priests may persuade them to I know not; I am confident the gentry will never be able to move them from their resolution to enjoy their present ease and quiet as long as by the State it shall be permitted to them.<sup>2</sup>

Had the system thus established been continued for a few more years, the industrial advantages of Ireland, the abundance of soil, the cheapness of labour, the boundless quantities of admirable wool, the unrivalled rivers and harbours, could not have failed to have attracted thither energetic men from all countries, who, in turning the national resources to account, would have acquired permanent mastery over the old inhabitants. Romanism, sternly repressed, must have died out, as Protestantism died in Spain and Italy. Industry was everywhere alive, creating wealth and comfort, order and organization. Intelligent and just authority laid an effectual bridle on rebellion, and the progress made by Ireland in the following century, when the most beneficial of these conditions was unhappily absent, and only the most galling were retained, encourages a belief that, had Cromwell's principles been accepted as the permanent rule of Irish administration, the lines of difference between the two countries, now as marked as ever, and almost as threatening, would have long ago disappeared.

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Bishop of Meath.

<sup>2</sup> *Thurloe Papers.*



## CHAPTER III.

## THE REVOLUTION.

## SECTION I.

THE problem which presented itself on the Restoration of the Stuarts was incapable of equitable solution. The Anglo-Irish leaders of the rebellion of 1641, who, previous to the rising, had undoubtedly received encouragement from Charles the First—who, in the course of the civil war, had given money and sent regiments to England to fight on the royal side, and had received their final defeat from Cromwell himself, expected naturally to be restored to their estates, and to see the Parliamentary adventurers, and the soldiers who had been the instruments of their oppression, flung out from the lands which they had usurped. The perplexed and Protean insurrection had settled itself at last into the form which, as originally designed, it was to have assumed from the first—a defence of the Crown against the Parliament. All parties and both religions had accepted the King's viceroy as their leader. The wreck of the Royal army had crossed from England, and

had received their last overthrow in the Irish ranks, and in defending Irish towns. Even the Nuncio himself, the leader of the party most bitterly antagonistic to England, had been recognized by Charles as a friend.

All factions—Ormond's own original Royalists, the Lords of the Pale, and the Irish of Owen Roe—had been included in a common confiscation. All guilty alike in the eyes of the Commonwealth, they expected to be regarded in the Restoration as alike deserving reward; or, if not reward, at least replacement in the properties which they had lost in the King's service.

It was no less true, on the other hand, that the rebellion, whatever the differences of opinion among its chiefs, had been at its commencement a revolt of Ireland against England, and as such denounced and disavowed by the King himself. It had been a ferocious effort of the Irish race to shake off English authority, to exterminate the English settlers and the Protestant religion. It had been attended by horrors and atrocities which had burnt themselves indelibly into every Saxon memory; and the Cromwellian conquest had been in fact a resubjugation of Ireland by England, and in the name of England. English authority had been, for the first time, completely established over the whole island, and it was as little likely that England would consent to part with the fruits of a victory so precious and so dearly bought as that the English settled there would yield up, without a struggle, their just reward for the blood

which they had sacrificed. The Cromwellians could only be ejected by arming the native Irish against them ; and the bare attempt or mention of such a step would have cost Charles his hardly recovered crown. By all technical forms—by engagements written and spoken—by the indisputable truth that, before their final defeat, they had all been accepted by the King as loyal subjects, and were all in arms in his favour, his honour was pledged to do justice to the Irish Catholic landowners. By the essential facts of the case, which if he disregarded he must return to exile—by his duty to Ireland itself, which, brief as had been its period of repose, was rising into prosperity such as it had never known before, under the impulse of the vigorous race which had been established there by the late Protector, he was compelled to leave untouched in a large degree the disposition by which the old owners of Ireland had been either driven beyond the Shannon, or converted into landless exiles.

As soon as it became clear that Richard Cromwell would be unable to hold his place, his brother Henry, who was then in command in Ireland, with a loyalty supremely honourable to him, acquiesced without condition or stipulation in the restoration of the Stuarts. He was popular with all parties ; he might have made a party among his father's soldiers strong enough to have enabled him to make terms for his own Irish estates. The revolution was too momentous to allow him to remember so small a matter as his personal

interest. Smaller men were naturally less high-minded. After Henry Cromwell, the two persons most trusted by the Protector were Sir Charles Coote, who had assisted so efficiently in ending the rebellion, and Roger Boyle, Lord Broghill, third son of the great Earl of Cork. Both had acquired enormous estates under the new settlement. Their influence with the army was second only to that of Henry Cromwell, and seeing how the tide was running, and foreseeing the difficulties which would arise, they were among the first, in the army's interests as well as their own, to speak of the Restoration, and to bind the King to them by inviting his return.

The Court of Charles on the Continent was thronged with exiled Irish patriots. No sooner was the approaching change known, than of course he was beset on all sides by clamours for reparation. He put the petitioners off with promises till he was established in England. In the autumn of 1660 a Commission sate at Westminster, to consider their claims; and counsel were heard on their side.

The first attempt was for a really equitable compromise. Sir James Barry, the Irish Lord Chief Justice, sketched briefly the history of the massacre, some scenes of which he had himself witnessed. He proposed that the Irish claimants should be heard in detail before separate juries, and that those who could prove that they had borne no share, direct or indirect, in murder, should have their claims allowed. Some test of this kind was at last ultimately adopted; not

however till on both sides there had been much unreal declamation. Sir Nicholas Plunket, who represented the Irish, spoke with national fervour of their loyalty and their sufferings in the royal cause. Lord Broghill showed in answer, that the King's real friends had been the Protestant army, which had been so forward in promoting the Restoration. To the Irish professions of loyalty he replied by producing three documents, which, considering how confused a business the war had been, proved practically extremely little: an order from the Kilkenny Council, at one stage of the conflict, to prosecute Ormond with fire and sword; an offer of Ireland, from the same Council, to any Catholic prince who would take the country under his protection; and lastly an acknowledgment, signed by the Irish leaders in the last campaign, of the authority of the Rump Parliament. To have served under Cromwell was at least as great an offence as to have acknowledged the Parliament; and the charge, as coming from Lord Broghill, partook of an insolence which probably arose from a knowledge that the cause was already privately determined.

The Irish deputies were dismissed, and the King declared his resolution. He admitted the difficulty of the case. The Act of the English Parliament under which money had been raised by debenture bonds on Irish forfeited estates, and on which half the confiscations rested, had been confirmed by Charles the First, and he could not disavow his father's act. It was true that, when English rebels were subsequently meditat-

ing regicide, he had himself made peace with his Irish subjects, and had accepted their help to prevent if possible that infamous crime from being consummated. He did not deny that, in so doing, he had entered into obligations which he ought not to forget. Yet to fulfil these obligations under existing circumstances would be against the interests of Ireland herself. The titles of the adventurers and soldiers might not bear perhaps minute examination, but he found himself, he said, rather inclined to mercy than to law. He had made up his mind to leave them undisturbed, or, if disturbed from their present holdings, to allow them an equivalent in land elsewhere. The debentures still unpaid should be acknowledged also. But while justice was thus done on one side, the other should not be left unconsidered. When every bond was settled there would still remain vast estates unallotted with which to reward the really deserving. Protestant Royalists like Ormond and Lord Inchiquin were to be reinstated at once, and intruders settled on their territories were to receive lands in some other place. Innocent Catholics too, whose only fault was their religion, were not to suffer, and should be replaced in their homes; and a list followed of persons said to have merited particular favour—the great Anglo-Irish Catholic nobles, Clanrickarde, Westmeath, Dillon, Gormanstown, Fingal, Mountgarret, Netterville, and many others, who in their hard position, compromised as they had been in many ways, and responsible for terrible bloodshed, had yet desired throughout to confine the insurrection

within the lines of opposition to Parliament and the Puritans as distinct from the English Crown.

There remained others—those who had been criminal, but had shown repentance, and had done good service later, either in Ireland or abroad. Of these, such as had accepted lands in Connaught were expected to abide by their bargains. They might consider their case a hard one, but no more could be done for them. Those who had preferred exile might look for favour in time, but must wait and be patient. English families who had sold their interests at home, had transplanted themselves to Ireland, and built and fenced and enclosed there, could not at once be dispossessed and ruined. Great changes could only be accomplished by degrees. The innocent must be provided for first.

Two classes of persons were to receive no favour—those who had been concerned actively in the massacres, or, if they were dead, their heirs and representatives; and, to balance these, the regicides, whom, although it was through them, and only them, that England had any authority left in Ireland to exercise, the conditions of the case made it possible, and even necessary, to exclude.

Thus the King hoped all parties would be satisfied.

1661 The wicked would be deterred from wickedness by such signal evidence of justice, and the good be encouraged in loyalty by the favour and mercy shown to them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The King's Declaration, November 30, 1660.' 14 & 15 Charles II. *Irish Statutes*.

More than this Charles could not have done ; less he could not have honourably tried to do. However miserable in its consequences might be the overthrow of Cromwell's policy, however fatal the redistribution over the country of so many elements of mischief—some measure of the kind was a price necessary to be paid for the blessing of a restored monarchy.

No less inevitably followed the re-establishment of the Irish Church, the dissolution of the short-lived union, and the restoration of the political constitution.

Coote, created for his services Earl of Mountrath, and Lord Broghill, created Earl of Orrery, presided as Lords Justices at the re-inauguration of the Royal authority. The Parliament met in Dublin on May 8, 1661. In 1641 the Catholics were in a majority. In 1661, so completely had they been crushed, out of 260 members they had but one. But the Protestantism of the assembly made its task only the more difficult. They had to declare themselves happy in the restoration of a sovereign against whom most of them had fought. They had to condemn, as an atrocious usurpation, the power of which they had been the instruments, yet to maintain the fortunes which they had won for themselves in the service of that power, to preserve the reality of the conquest, and to fling a veil over it of unmeaning phrases and hollow affectations.

They acquitted themselves with incomparable skill. The first session was a short one. The Act of Settlement was not yet ready ; but, in congratulating the King on his return, the members made haste to show



‘ that they were none of the seditious rebellious rabble whom it had pleased the Almighty to suppress by the might of his power, but loyal subjects, preserved alive amidst the storms of persecution, who abhorred the rebellion and traitorous murder and parricide of his majesty’s father of blessed memory.’ In the eagerness of their loyalty they discovered that his majesty’s title to the Irish throne ‘ did not descend from Henry the Second, but from times far more ancient, as by authentic evidence appeared.’ They could not conceal ‘ the unspeakable joy ’ with which they welcomed the revival of ‘ the true worship of God ’ among them, and civil government re-established on the fundamental laws of the land ; and, while it was necessary to enact that the proceedings in the courts of law which had passed under the name of the Protector should be held valid, they insisted, notwithstanding, that the Protectorate itself was ‘ a wicked, traitorous, and abominable usurpation.’<sup>1</sup>

Ormond, raised for his services to a dukedom, restored to his estates, and with expectations of vast additions to them, as a reward for his exertions, came back the next year as viceroy. Parliament again met in April, 1662, and the great question was now ready for solution.

The preamble of the Act of Settlement<sup>2</sup> was a miracle of ingenuity. The Lord-Lieutenant was the same person whose defeat by Cromwell had rendered

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<sup>1</sup> *Statutes of the Realm, Ireland* : 13 Charles II. caps. 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> 14 & 15 Charles II. cap. 2.

possible the confiscation which was now to be legalized. Cromwell was to be disowned with execration; yet his work was to be defended, and <sup>1662</sup> the fruit of it secured; while Coote and Broghill and the rest were to be made to appear as if they had acted as subjects of a sovereign against whom they were openly in arms.

After repeating the story of 1641, the murder of many thousand English subjects, the universal rebellion which ensued, and the establishment of an Irish government at Kilkenny independent of England, the Act went on to say, 'that Almighty God had given his majesty, by and through his English Protestant subjects, absolute victory and conquest over the Irish Popish rebels and enemies, so as they, their lives, liberties, and estates, were at his majesty's disposition by the laws of the kingdom.' 'Compelled by necessity,' and 'to prevent the further desolation of the country,' 'certain of his subjects,' 'during his majesty's absence beyond the sea,' had enquired into the origin of the rebellion, had dispossessed the authors of it of their lands, and had sold or otherwise disposed of them to persons who, by money or immediate services, had contributed to the conquest; and these persons were the same who, having secured the power in their hands, had invited his majesty to come home, and had yielded Ireland to his obedience. His majesty, after due consideration, had made known his pleasure; and the Parliament, having weighed the character of the insurrection, and the obvious intention of the

promoters of it to eradicate the British inhabitants and the Protestant religion, having considered the blood and treasure which had been expended, and the unspeakable sufferings which had been undergone to reduce the kingdom to the obedience of the Crown of England, declared themselves heartily gratified with the King's resolution. 'The rapines and massacres committed by the Irish and Popish rebels were not only well known to the present Parliament, but were notorious to the world.' 'The artifices which had been used for many years to murder witnesses, suppress evidence, and vitiate and embezzle such records and testimonies as, made against particular persons,' had failed nevertheless to suppress the truth; and the rebels, having thrown off their allegiance to the English Crown, 'had become subdued and conquered enemies, and had justly forfeited their titles and estates.' The Parliament, therefore, concluded that all confiscations legitimately growing out of the insurrection ought to be held good. The lands of those who could prove that they had borne no part in it should be restored, and the adventurers or soldiers in possession of them should be compensated in some other district.

A Court of Claims was established to examine each case in detail, and the innocent were allowed to hope that they should have speedy satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> The working of an act so vaguely worded depended wholly

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Act of Settlement*: 14 & 15 Charles II. cap. 2.

on the temper of the juries before whom the cases came. Innocence was a wide term. Guilt might mean anything, from mere knowledge of the intended rising—under which construction every Catholic landowner in Ireland would fall probably within the excluded list—to active participation in massacre, and this could be traced to a comparatively insignificant number. The Act was construed so favourably to the Catholic petitioners, that more of the soldiers and adventurers were removed than there was land elsewhere to satisfy. A million acres cultivated, or capable of cultivation, remained undisposed of; <sup>1665</sup> and to these were to be added the allotments of the regicides, Ireton, Fleetwood, Ludlow, and others, who had bought estates, or received grants of them to their families. But out of these lands half of Tipperary was given to the Duke of York. Ormond's vast domains had to be restored, with additions, as well as those of the loyal Protestants and of the Anglo-Irish peers and gentlemen who had been specially named by the King, and whose claims Parliament had allowed. Many settlers were thus ejected for whom no compensation could be found; a second Act was found necessary to save the Protestant interest, and the tendency of the Court of Claims to decide in favour of the old owners became still more evident from the compromise to which the Protestant colonists found it necessary to submit. By the 17th and 18th of Charles II. cap. 3 (1665), the soldiers, adventurers, and debenture holders consented to accept two-thirds of their legitimate

claims, and those already in possession, to part with a third of the land they held to secure an unchallenged tenure of all that remained.

By this sacrifice sufficient was obtained to meet all demands that could fairly stand scrutiny ; and, in return, to put an end to the uncertainty which must have otherwise hung over half the new holdings, the period within which Catholic claimants of estates must have proved their innocence was limited to the current year. Witnesses died off ; particular things were forgotten ; and innocence would be considered established unless proof of guilt was forthcoming. If the challenge might be postponed indefinitely, no tenure at all under the Act of Settlement could be considered secure. There was a frank admission that the object of the second Act was to defend the Protestant interest. So great had been the tendency of juries to favour the native Catholics that a clause was inserted directly ordering the Act to be construed beneficially to the Protestants. The King, in return, 'that more old proprietors might be restored,' agreed to abandon debentures which had lapsed to the Crown where part of the purchase-money had been left unpaid.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, amidst confusion and heart-burning, the ownership of the land of Ireland became once more determined.

According to the Down survey, made at Cromwell's order by Sir William Petty, the entire surface of the

<sup>1</sup> *Second Act of Settlement* : 17 & 18 Charles II. cap. 2.

four provinces contained ten million five hundred thousand Irish acres.<sup>1</sup> Of these a million and a half were bog, mountain, and lough. Another million and a half was coarse land, commonly called unprofitable. Of good land, arable and grass, there remained seven million five hundred thousand acres. The three million acres of wild country had been left wholly to the native Irish. Of the good land there had fallen under forfeiture from the rebellion, five million two hundred thousand acres, nearly all of which, before October, 1641, had been owned by Catholics. Two millions belonged to the Protestants planted by Elizabeth and James, who had been the objects of the massacres, and had recovered their lands under the Commonwealth. Three hundred thousand acres were the property of the Established Church, belonging either to the bishops' sees, or to the deans and chapters. These had been left untouched, being designed for the support of Cromwell's ministry, and reverted to the Church on the Restoration. Of the five million two hundred thousand acres which had been forfeited, there were given back to Catholics, under the two Acts of Settlement, two million three hundred and forty thousand acres. Two hundred thousand more were restored to Ormond, Inchiquin, Roscommon, and other Royalist Protestants; a hundred and twenty thousand were given to the Duke of York—substantially, therefore, to the Catholic cause. The

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<sup>1</sup> 121 Irish = 196 English, but the estimate was too low. The entire surface of Ireland amounts to about 20 million English acres.

rest remained to the adventurers and soldiers, or the speculators who had purchased their shares of them; and to this remainder were to be added eighty thousand acres in Connaught, sold by the transplanted Irish to Protestant capitalists.

As a total consequence of their rebellion, therefore, the Irish Catholics, who, before 1641, had owned two-thirds of the good land of Ireland and all the waste, were now reduced to something less than one-third; Sir William Petty appending to his summary the significant remarks, that of the Irish who pretended innocency, seven out of eight had their claims allowed; that those who, either under this plea or under the special favour of the Crown, were restored, received their estates again enlarged by a fifth, as a compensation for their losses; that by forged feofments of what was more than their own they obtained an additional third; and, finally, 'that of those adjudged innocents, not one in twenty was really so.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Petty's *Political Anatomy of Ireland*.

## SECTION II.

SHORN of a third of the lands which they had regarded as their own, and with an inevitable sense of insecurity from the return among them of their irreconcilable enemies, the Cromwellian settlers were even more seriously disturbed by the re-imposition of the authority of the Established Church. The Independents had not been popular in Ireland; the Presbyterians had not forgotten or forgiven the execution of Charles the First; and, in their hatred of a form of religion which, except politically, was indistinguishable from their own, they acquiesced in the restoration of the Episcopalianism which, in the days of Strafford, had trampled on them and tyrannized over them.

The proportion of Protestants to Catholics had increased very considerably since the settlement. Of the latter there were now 800,000; of the former 300,000. A hundred thousand were Scots, and almost to a man Presbyterians. Of the English, half only were Episcopalian; the rest were Presbyterians, Independents, or Quakers. The Establishment, however, was the religion of gentlemen. The events of the last years had brought discredit on Nonconformity. Bramhall came back, and was made Primate. Two archbishops and ten bishops were consecrated at St. Patrick's on January 27, 1661. They lost not a moment in teaching Dissenters of all kinds that their



day was over—in teaching the Presbyterians especially the value to them of that loyalty to the Crown which had made them so bitter against the ministers sent by Cromwell.

The Cromwellian settlers were almost all Nonconformists, the Scots in Ulster wholly so. To insist that no one should officiate who had not been ordained by a bishop was to deprive two-thirds of the Protestant inhabitants of the only religious ministrations which they would accept, and to force on them the alternative of exile or submission to a ritual which they abhorred as much as Popery; while, to enhance the absurdity, there were probably not a hundred episcopally-ordained clergy in the whole island. Yet this was what the bishops deliberately thought it wise to do. They carried through Parliament a second Act of Uniformity. To the already stringent conditions of ordination they added another, which was like the offspring of lunacy. Not only was every clergyman to profess before his congregation his full acceptance of the Prayer Book; he had to subscribe a declaration that a subject, under no pretence, might bear arms against his King; that he abhorred the traitorous position which distinguished between the King's person and the King's lawful authority; and that the oath to the League and Covenant, which had been generally taken by the Protectorate ministers, was illegal and impious. No person, for whose political and spiritual orthodoxy these securities had not been taken, was permitted to hold a benefice, to

teach, preach, or administer the sacrament in any church, chapel, or public place.<sup>1</sup> The form of prohibition extended to the Catholics, the practice applied only to the Nonconformists, who became at once the objects of an unrelenting and unscrupulous persecution. There were seventy Presbyterian ministers in Ulster. Eight only accepted the bishops' terms and were ordained; the rest were deprived, and, when persisting in recusancy, were imprisoned.<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Taylor, the impersonation and special jewel of Anglicanism, who came over with Bramhall, to be made Bishop of Down, and afterwards of Dromore, at one visitation declared thirty-six churches in his diocese vacant,<sup>3</sup> and sent people of his own to supply the empty pulpits. The miserable division, in the face of the common enemy, thus condemned the Church from the first to irremediable failure as a missionary institution. It made no converts from the Catholics. It checked instantly and decisively the immigration of Puritans and Presbyterians from England and Scotland, who would gladly have welcomed a refuge in Ireland. The more serious of the Cromwellians sold their holdings, and left a country which could be no longer a home for them; and then commenced that fatal emigration of Nonconformist Protestants from Ireland to New England, which, enduring for more than a century, drained Ireland of its soundest Pro-

<sup>1</sup> 17 & 18 Charles II. cap. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Reid, *History of the Presbyterians in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 267,

Killen's edition, where the list of the expelled ministers is given.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 263.

testant blood, and assisted in raising beyond the Atlantic the power and the spirit which by-and-by paid England home for the madness which had driven them thither. Ulster partially recovered its freedom. The Scots were too numerous and too resolute to be put down, and they wrung from the bishops at last the connivance which was allowed to the Catholics. The southern provinces were less fortunate. The few families of Independents which remained were condemned to spiritual isolation. So long as the first owners lived they retained their own beliefs; but, deprived as they were of school or chapel, they could not perpetuate them. Liturgy and mass were to them alike detestable. To church they would not go; separate family worship they were unable to maintain; and thus their children were swept into the Irish stream, became Catholics, like those among whom they lived and married, and trod in the old steps of the generation who had gone before them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The immense majority of the soldier settlers left the country. Lord Clarendon, however—(Henry, eldest son of the Chancellor, Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland in 1686)—probably underrates the number that remained. ‘Your majesty,’ he wrote to James II., ‘is said to believe that the gross of the English of this kingdom are fanatics of Cromwell’s brood, the offspring of those who served in the rebellion against your sacred father, which I presume to say is a very great mistake. There are very few of the original soldiers and adventurers now left, or of their descendants. Of the latter not twenty families, and no great number of the former. The generality of those two great interests sold their lots, many of them to honest men, who, at the King’s restoration, brought with them out of England to lay out here what little remained of their fortunes, and many of them to a new sort of people, who are always to be found where fortunes are to be made, and who never had anything to do in the rebellion.’—‘The Earl of Clarendon to the King, August 14, 1686.’ *State Letters*, vol. i.

Had the Church possessed an expansive power of its own, there would have been at least some compensation. But the Anglican system was a creation of compromise. It was the religion of educated gentlemen: it was not and could not be the religion of the poor, to whom emotion stands in the place of knowledge. The Established Church of Ireland produced many excellent and some great men; but in the eyes of the Celtic peasantry it was the cold symbol of Saxon supremacy. It could neither compete successfully with the priests for the adherence of the people, nor could it resist the influences to which, through its connection with the State, it was itself peculiarly exposed; while the Catholic complexion of the Prayer Book was exceptionally unfortunate in a country in which the development of Protestantism was the condition of a settled government. 'The state of the Church,' wrote the Earl of Clarendon to the Archbishop of Canterbury, after Bramhall and Jeremy Taylor and Leslie of Raphoe, and their brother prelates, had worked their will on the Dissenters, 'is very miserable; most of the fabrics are in ruins; very few of the clergy reside on their cures, but employ pitiful curates, which necessitates the people to look after a Romish priest or Nonconformist preacher, and there are plenty of both. I find it an ordinary thing for a minister to have five or six cures of souls, and to get them supplied by those who will do it cheapest. Some hold five or six ecclesiastical preferments worth 900*l.* a year, get them all served for 150*l.* a year,

and preach themselves perhaps once a year. When I discourse with my Lords Bishops on these things I confess I have not satisfactory answers, but, with your Grace's help, I do not despair of doing some good, for many things are redressed without any other difficulty than men's doing their duties. Several of the clergy who have been in England have sent to me to renew their leave of absence; and they must return; for absence without leave forfeits the preferment, and none shall be licensed without good grounds. The Archbishop of Tuam,<sup>1</sup> after three years' absence, is resolved to come over, and I hear is on his way. Down and Connor<sup>2</sup> has been absent six years. He wrote to renew his license. I refused.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Vesey.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Hacket, afterwards deprived for simony.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Earl of Clarendon to the Archbishop of Canterbury, May 25, 1686.' *State Letters*, vol. i.

## SECTION III.

THE salt of English Puritanism was driven out of Ireland at a time when Puritanism represented the most genuine element in the English mind. <sup>1663</sup>

The place of it was taken by speculators seeking their fortunes, solid, hard-hearted men, indifferent to creeds, and well contented with an establishment which left them alone. Toleration of the Catholics was a natural part of the same policy. The penal laws were suspended at the special instance of the King; and once more it was the reign of conciliation. Though half the penalty had been remitted, the Irish had been heavily punished. They would now, it was to be hoped, show themselves duly grateful for the indulgence extended to them.

The rebellion was not, however, to be forgotten. The 23rd of October was set apart, by Act of Parliament, as a solemn anniversary, to be observed with a religious service and a sermon, 'in perpetual memory of a conspiracy so inhuman and cruel as the like was never heard of in any age or kingdom.'<sup>1</sup> The new Protestant gentry were shrewd men of business, who meant to incur no more risks than they could help. They had come to Ireland to push their way by English energy and enterprise. Whatever their political opinions, they were well aware that, as the world then was,

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<sup>1</sup> 14 & 15 Charles II. cap. 8.

skill and industry were mainly Protestant virtues ; and if Ireland was to become, as they intended, a second England, Irish Popery, with its idleness and its faction fights and slatternly habits, could not be allowed to recover the ascendant. With their eyes open to the manufacturing resources of the country, they passed an act to encourage French, Flemish, and Dutch Protestant workmen to come and settle among them. They failed to see, that the cause which was driving out the Independents would serve equally to keep out the foreign Calvinists ; but the natural sense of Saxon men of business would probably have soon enlightened them had free trade been continued, and had they felt the absence of skilled labour. Before the days of coal and steam the unlimited water power of Ireland gave her natural advantages in the race of manufactures, which, if she had received fair play, would have attracted thither thousands of skilled immigrants. The Presbyterians held their ground in Ulster with the help of the now rising linen trade. Had other trades been permitted to grow, and an industrial middle class established itself in the southern provinces, they would speedily have wrung adequate toleration from the dominant Church. This one true and real justice to Ireland, unhappily, was precisely what the reconstituted government of England refused to allow her. By the parties now and for another century in the ascendant there, Ireland was regarded as a colony to be administered not for her own benefit, but for the convenience of the mother country.

So rapidly under the Cromwellian despotism had the wealth of Ireland increased, that, having been brought to the lowest depth of ruin, she was now able, after defraying all her own expenses, to settle on the King a permanent revenue of 30,000*l.* a year. Home jealousy took alarm at a growth so rapid. Ireland, if allowed free trade, would, it was feared, undersell England in the world's markets. Profits would fall. The value of real estate would fall. The best artisans would emigrate to a country where land was cheap and living inexpensive. English commerce was about to be ruined for the sake of the unruly island, which was for ever a thorn in her side. Ireland was admitted to the benefit of the first Navigation Act of 1660. English ships possessed no privileges which were not extended to Irish. The export of Irish as well as English wool to foreign countries was prohibited, because it was the best in Europe; the fleeces of France and Spain could not be woven into the finest kinds of cloths without an intermixture of the wool of these islands; and while they retained the material the English and Irish weavers retained the monopoly of the manufacture. Ireland was not injured so long as each country alike might export her own cloths. But the equality of privilege lasted only till the conclusion of the settlement and till the revenue had been assigned to the Crown. In the Navigation Act of 1663 Ireland was left out. She had established an independent trade with New England; it was destroyed. All produce of the colonies sent to Ireland, all Irish produce sent to the colonies, had first



to be landed in England and thence reshipped in English bottoms.<sup>1</sup> She had established a large and lucrative cattle trade with Bristol, Milford, and Liverpool. It was supposed to lower the value of English farm produce, and was utterly prohibited. Neither cow or bullock, sheep or pig, fat or lean, might be transported from Ireland to England.<sup>2</sup> Salt beef and bacon, even butter and cheese, lay under the same interdict.<sup>3</sup>

With the restriction of her chief exports, her shipping interest suffered a simultaneous eclipse. Such direct trade as she retained was with France, Spain, and Portugal, as if England wished to force her, in spite of herself, to feel the Catholic countries to be her best friends.

It was the beginning of a policy which was to be persevered in till it had for ever blighted the hope of Ireland becoming a prosperous Protestant country. Further, however, it was not immediately carried. The woollen manufactures and the linen manufactures were for the present permitted to stand side by side, and to compete with the productions of Ireland's powerful rival. The saffron shirt of the Irish, of native make, had been celebrated from immemorial time. Lord Strafford had encouraged further a form of industry which would give least umbrage in England. He had imported choice kinds of flax-seed,

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<sup>1</sup> 15 Charles II. cap. 7.

<sup>2</sup> 18 Charles II. cap. 2. *English Statutes.*

<sup>3</sup> 32 Charles II. cap. 2. *English Statutes.*

and given bounties on the cultivation. The woollen manufacture, which he had discouraged, had been set on foot again by Cromwell. The prohibitions of the export of the raw material was an encouragement to the native weavers, and Irish woollens were acquiring a name in Europe. The two trades were equally thriving; and, had they been allowed to stand, there would have been four Ulsters instead of one. As it was, the reign of Charles the Second, notwithstanding some absurd restrictions, and the more absurd religious persecutions of the Dissenters, was looked back upon in the next century as Ireland's golden age. The Catholics had not recovered from their punishment. They were indulged, and they appeared to be grateful. Trade was busy and growing; and the tenure of property was too insecure to permit absenteeism. The spent force of the impulse which had been imparted by the vigorous administration of Cromwell was not yet exhausted; and the tendency, though at a slackening rate, was still forward and upward.

## SECTION IV.

THE Church meanwhile was making no converts.

1666 The Catholics were recovering strength. Every parish had its priest again, and friaries and convents sprung up as if the laws against them had been blotted from the statute book. The elasticity of the permanent customs duties dispensed for the present with the necessity of another Parliament;<sup>1</sup> but the suspension of the constitution could not last for ever. At the next election the Catholics were prepared to resume their privilege of voting. A Catholic majority might easily be returned in the House of Commons, and a collision of the creeds would be inevitable. The Acts of Settlement had done too much or too little: too much, if Protestant ascendancy was to be maintained and Ireland was to be treated as a conquered country; too little, if the Catholic Irish were to be really conciliated. Both parties felt, that with the accession of a Catholic king the struggle must be revived.

The 'Tories' continued to give trouble. The sons of the dispossessed owners levied war upon the intruders, supported by the sympathies of the people; and, with a halo of spurious patriotism about them, hung about the Protestant settlements, burnt the

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<sup>1</sup> After the session of 1665-6, no Parliament met in Ireland for twenty-six years.

farmhouses, and shot and stabbed their inmates. The farmers armed in self-defence, and organized themselves into regiments of militia, that there might be no second surprise.

Dangerous influences were at work, even in Charles's lifetime, at the English Court. The secret advisers in Irish matters were the two <sup>1670</sup> Talbots,<sup>1</sup> Peter, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and Colonel Richard—lying Dick, as he was called in the London coffee-houses—known afterwards as the famous Duke of Tyrconnell. Archbishop Peter was treated at the Viceroy's Court with distinguished consideration. He appeared in council in his episcopal robes. In 1670 he borrowed plate and hangings from the Castle for a splendid religious celebration; Lord Berkely, who was Lord-Lieutenant, sending them to him with a message that, in a few months, 'he hoped to see high mass at Christ Church.'<sup>2</sup> Colonel Talbot prevailed on Charles, in the following year, to reopen the Acts of Settlement, and order an inquiry into the working of them. The conspirators believed themselves even then in a full career towards success, when they were stopped by the English House of Commons, who insisted sternly that the acts should not be tampered with; that the Talbots should be sent about their business;<sup>3</sup> and the law be observed which disqualified Catholics who declined the Supremacy Oath from being

<sup>1</sup> Sons of Sir William Talbot, of Cartown, Kildare, and related nearly to the Talbots of Malahide.

<sup>2</sup> HARRIS, vol. i. p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 274, 275.

members of corporations and in the commission of the peace. The Papal party had shown their teeth too soon, and slunk back out of sight; but with James's accession the hour of triumph had come.

Let the enthusiasts who believe that Ireland can be governed upon 'Irish ideas,' and that Irish Catholics can be contented with concessions which leave them less than omnipotent, study the history of the last attempt to do them 'justice' on these principles.

The first sign of what was coming was an order for the Protestants to be disarmed. Ormond, whom  
1686 Charles left at his death as Viceroy, and from whom no help could be looked for in the measures which James contemplated, was allowed to resign. Lord Granard, and the Primate Michael Boyle, an old man almost in his dotage, were made Lords Justices. By them instructions were issued to take away the muskets of the militia, on pretence of preventing disturbances; 'muskets of the militia' were construed to cover the guns and pistols of the Protestant gentry; and Sir Thomas Newcomen, Granard's brother-in-law, when questions were asked in council said fiercely, 'that the English wanted no arms;' the work was not half done, and 'he hoped they would never have arms put into their hands again.'<sup>1</sup> The Tories took the hint, and went vigorously about their part of the business. The Government could not proclaim them for want of formal information, which the gentlemen

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<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Clarendon to Rochester, January 19. 1686.' *Clarendon State Letters*, vol. i.

were afraid to send in ; and a zealous officer at Cork, Captain Aunger, who killed a notorious robber in attempting to take him, was threatened with indictment.' <sup>1</sup> Those who were not wilfully blind, saw plainly how events were tending. There were still persons, however, who could believe that if Protestant ascendancy were put down, and the two creeds be placed on an equality, the lion and the lamb would lie down in peace together ; and, as long as plausibility and cant of toleration would pass current, they formed a convenient shield to the real purpose. The Primate Chancellor resigned the great seal. Sir Charles Porter was sent from England to succeed him. The Earl of Clarendon was appointed Lord-Lieutenant ; and James, when Clarendon waited on him and took leave, gave a distinct assurance that the Acts of Settlement should be maintained. The Catholics as Catholics were to have equality of privilege with the Protestants ; but the Irish were still to understand that they were to suffer the consequences of having rebelled.<sup>2</sup> The principle of the Government was to be religious toleration. Popery was to be no longer treated as a disqualification for office ; and from this it seemed to follow, that the anti-popery laws had been unfair, the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Clarendon to Sunderland, Jan. 19, 1686.' *Letters*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> 'When the King sent me here he told me, that he would support the English interest, and that he sent me that the world might see that he would do so. They were to

have the freedom of their religion, yet he would have them see too that he looked upon them as a conquered people, and that he would support the settlement inviolably.' — 'Clarendon to Rochester, October 2, 1686.' *Clarendon Letters*, vol. i.

rebellions against them justified, and the consequent confiscation a crime. Principles, however, were not to be tested by the conclusions growing out of them, and Clarendon came over with an honest intention of carrying out his master's wishes, so far as he understood those wishes. He was an Englishman, convinced as his father had been, as every intelligent English statesman had been, that if Ireland was to be a wholesome member of the empire, the English interest must be maintained. If he had been uncertain at his arrival, a brief experience sufficed to show him what the native race were, and what the country would become if handed back into their keeping.<sup>1</sup>

The next practical step was the reconstitution of the Courts of Law. The second Act of Settlement appeared to preclude the revival of claims on the Protestants' estates; but ingenious barristers could find roads through statutes, if sure of a favourable hearing; and it was therefore necessary to admit Catholics to the bench. Clarendon made no objection, but recommended that, if there were to be Catholic judges, they should be Catholic Englishmen. He saw

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<sup>1</sup> 'It is sad to see the people—I mean the natives—such proper, lusty fellows, poor, almost naked, but will work never but when they are ready to starve, and when they have got them a few days' wages will walk about idly till that be gone. If they cannot then get work they steal. Their women do nothing—not so much as spin or knit; but have a cow, two or three, according to the bigness of their ground, which they milk, and on that they live. Their houses are pig-styes, walls cast up and covered with straw and mud, and out of one of these huts, ten or twelve feet square, you shall see five or six men and women bolt out as you pass by, who stand staring about.' —'Clarendon to Rochester, May 4, 1686.' *Letters*, vol. i.

signs of uneasiness, he said, and apprehensions of change; the Irish who had been restored by the Court of Claims were as much afraid of re-opening so sore a subject as the Protestants.<sup>1</sup> He advised—and his opinion was endorsed by Chief Justice Keating, an Irishman by birth—that if the King meant to admit Catholics to high offices of state, he should first appoint a commission to confirm the existing tenures, and place the security of property beyond a doubt.<sup>2</sup>

The King, who had Colonel Talbot at his ear again, listened neither to the Viceroy nor to the Chief Justice. The judges in Ireland held their office *durante bene placito*. All the Protestants except three were removed, and their places filled by Catholics, one of them, Mr. Justice Daly, being described by Clarendon as ‘perfect Irish, of the old race, very bigoted and national.’ If equality of religion was to be the rule of the Bench—*à fortiori* it applied to the secondary offices. The army was thrown open and the commission of the peace. Catholics were to be sheriffs of counties. There had been Catholic sheriffs before the rebellion, and therefore there might be Catholic sheriffs again. When Clarendon objected that they must take the Oath of Supremacy, he was directed not to require the Oath of Supremacy. The same rule was applied to the Privy Council. The new judges were introduced on the board, and most of the great Catholic peers.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘To Rochester, May 8.’

<sup>2</sup> ‘To Rochester, March 14 and May 8, 1686.’ *Letters*, vol. i.



The hierarchy felt the ascending tide, and sounded the war trumpet, disdaining disguise. A convention was held at Dublin. Circulars were sent round by the Bishops, directing lists to be furnished from every parish of men able to bear arms.<sup>1</sup> 'I wish I knew how to act,' wrote the perplexed Clarendon to Lord Rochester. 'If the Protestant Clergy were to hold a convention without giving me notice, I would not suffer them to meet. I would punish them for the attempt, and I know the King would approve. These meetings ought not to be held without the supreme authority.'<sup>2</sup>

The Protestants were honourably eager to prove that they did not deserve mistrust. A Mr. Keating, an Irishman, had been killed in a duel by a son of Sir William Ashton. Ashton was in fault, and was put on his trial. He excepted against every Catholic that was empanelled. He was tried by a jury exclusively English, and the Irish clamoured that he would be acquitted. He was found guilty and hanged.

The exaggeration of justice was of course interpreted into cowardice. The next step was to place the arms of the militia beyond the reach of recovery. Chester Castle was made the arsenal for Ireland; and orders

<sup>1</sup> 'I had lately an information given me from a good hand to this effect, that every parish priest throughout the kingdom hath had instructions from their respective bishops, to give an exact list of all the men in every of their parishes

which may be fit to bear arms, and of what ability they are, and their return is given to the several bishops.'—'Clarendon to the Lord Treasurer, May 15, 1686.' *Letters*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

were given for the stores at Limerick, Athlone, and Carrickfergus to be removed to Dublin, from thence to be shipped to England.

The generation which remembered 1641 had not yet died out. The traditions of the massacre were told by the fireside of every Protestant family, and the circumstances which preceded it were all once more present with the fatal aggravation, that the King was now avowedly on their enemies' side, and there was no longer a Long Parliament to hold his hand. England, it almost seemed, was running the same road, and about to become Catholic itself.

Betrayed by their natural protectors, deliberately deprived of the means of self-defence, and handed over apparently to the mercies of exasperated and now triumphant enemies, the Protestants began to set their houses in order, and such of them as were able, to fly out of the country.

'Never in my life,' Clarendon wrote passionately to the King, 'have I met with people fuller of duty to your majesty, nor more desirous of opportunities to manifest their loyalty.' 'The King does not believe me,' he said, when he found remonstrance vain. 'Well, I have done my part. If the King finds his subjects here desert the country every week, as I am sure they do, perhaps I shall be believed then.'<sup>1</sup>

Fast as the changes were hurried forward, the revolution moved too slow for James's importunity.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Clarendon to Rochester, June 3.' *Letters*, vol. i.

Colonel Talbot, promoted to the ominous name of Earl of Tyrconnell, as if purposely to inflame the national Irish spirit, was now sent over to quicken Clarendon's hesitation. The army was to be remodelled. The King, Tyrconnell said when he arrived, would not keep a man in his service who had served under the Usurper. The Protestant officers were displaced, and Irish Catholics substituted. Since the sheriffs and magistrates were to be Catholics, Clarendon had at least nominated men of weight and station. The appointments did not satisfy Tyrconnell. 'Moderate Catholics' he was pleased to call 'Trimmers.'<sup>1</sup> 'By God! my lord,' he said—every second sentence contained an oath with him—'the sheriffs you made are generally rogues. There has not been an honest sheriff in Ireland these twenty years.' Tyrconnell and Nugent, one of the new puisne judges, drew a list of sheriffs for the year following, which Clarendon was forced to accept; and the entire civil magistracy of Ireland was now at the disposition of the Papist fanatics.

At length matters were ripe for the attack on the Acts of Settlement. Tyrconnell introduced the subject before the council in his peculiar manner.

'By God! my lord,' he said, rising from his seat to speak, 'these Acts of Settlement and this new interest are damned things!'

Such words were unusual at the Council Board, even in Ireland. The Viceroy interrupted him. 'Their business,' he urged, 'was to quiet men's minds, that

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Rochester, June 15.' *Letters*, vol. i.

the common interest might flourish, and trade and revenue increase.'

Tyrconnell was not to be stopped. 'We know,' he continued, 'the arts and damned roguish contrivances that procured those acts. I know it would make a confusion if they were touched; but Mr. Justice Keating and Sir John Temple told me that the new interested men would give a third or half what they have to secure the rest. I will say no more at present; but, by God! my lord, there have been foul damned things done here.'<sup>1</sup>

Tyrconnell was a remarkable specimen of a religious leader. 'In bare matters of fact,' wrote Clarendon to Lord Rochester, 'the truth will never be known from my Lord Tyrconnell. It is impossible you can believe, except you found it, as we do here, how wonderfully false he is in almost everything he says.'

'Lying Dick,' however, such as he was, represented the King's pleasure, and the Viceroy began to see that he could no longer depend on James's words to himself.

'All proceedings now look,' he said, 'as if the King's mind was altered, and as if he intended a total alteration. He consults only with the Irish whose interest is to break the settlement. All power is in the hands of the conquered nation, and the English, who did conquer, are left naked, and deprived even of the arms which by the patents of plantation they

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<sup>1</sup> 'Clarendon to Rochester, June 8.' *Letters*, vol. i.

are obliged to have in readiness for the King's service.'<sup>1</sup>

A third of these grants had been sacrificed at the second Act of Settlement. It was now broadly hinted that a third or half of what remained would be further expected of them. The moderate Catholics had desired that the acts should be confirmed. Their advanced representative on the council—the Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Sir Stephen Rice—frankly insisted that the acts must be repealed. It was assumed that, if time had been allowed, every claimant for reinstatement would have proved his innocence, and so have made good his right. As a compensation for the long deprivation, Sir R. Nagle, the Attorney-General, proposed that the ancient proprietors, who by the acts were intended to be restored to their estates after the present possessors were reprised, should at once be put in possession; and that the English occupants, after twenty or even thirty years of occupancy, having built, drained, fenced, and planted, and trebled or quadrupled the value of the properties, should be paid off at the price of the original debentures.<sup>2</sup>

While judges and law officers spoke plainly, the King still maintained an affected veil on his own intentions. He talked of summoning a Parliament; but there was not a child of ten years old that could be ignorant what a Parliament would do, assembled under such auspices as the present. The most sinister

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<sup>1</sup> 'Clarendon to Rochester, October 12.' *Letters*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> 'Clarendon to Ormond, August 28.' *Ibid.*

rumours were abroad. Clarendon continued to hope ; but, sanguine as he tried to be, an autumn progress through the south dispelled the possibility of illusion. The priests forbade the people to appear at his levees. Tyrconnell, not the Viceroy, was the representative of James Stuart in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The next post from England brought Clarendon word that he was in disgrace at the Court. His recall had been determined, and Tyrconnell was to take his place. Profoundly loyal as Clarendon was, he could not blind himself to what such an appointment would mean. The English interest was about to be sacrificed. The administration of the country was to be thrown into the hands of a set of men whose object was the same as that of the conspirators of 1641, though their road to it might lie through less violent means. He had come over on a mission of conciliation, and conciliation was found to imply, extremely plainly, the extirpation of the Protestant settlers. On the eve of his departure, he pointed out to his brother his unwilling conviction that, unless Ireland was to go her own way altogether, concession to the Catholic clergy was a delusion and a folly.

‘It is scarce possible for any that have not been here,’ he said, ‘to believe the profound ignorant bigotry the nation here are bred in by the priests,

<sup>1</sup> ‘At Cork, some gentlemen of both religions being together, and discoursing with some wonder how few of the natives had been with me, a Roman Catholic priest in the company, who will own it, said, “Our people are mad : our clergy have forbid gentlemen to appear.” Says another, “We have among us who pretend to govern and to know more of the King’s mind than my Lord Lieutenant.”’—‘Clarendon to Rochester, October 2.’ *Letters*, vol. ii.

who, to all appearance, seem to be as ignorant as themselves. The generality of them do believe that this kingdom is the Pope's; that the King has no right further than the Pope gives him authority; and that it is lawful for them to call in any foreign power to help them against those who oppose the jurisdiction of the Church, as has evidently appeared by the late rebellion. And I do assure you the same principles which carried on that rebellion have been since carefully propagated, and are now too publicly owned. True, many Roman Catholics declare against these principles, and do detest them, even priests. But these two things are observable; first, that those who detest those principles, and will not allow the Pope to have so great an authority at this time when Roman Catholics are put into all employments, are scarce taken notice of, and upbraided with the names of whigs and trimmers; and the children of the most active in the rebellion, and those who set up the Pope's authority most, are in the employments; and secondly, notwithstanding the moderation of those Roman Catholics I mention, not one of them will suffer any of the others to be prosecuted for any offence they commit.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Clarendon to Rochester, December 26, 1686.' *Letters*, vol. ii.

## SECTION V.

THE Irish believed that Ireland was theirs ; that the English were invading tyrants who had stolen their land, broken up their laws and habits, and proscribed their creed. The English believed that Ireland was a country attached, inseparably, by situation and circumstances to the English Crown ; that they were compelled to govern a people who were unable or unwilling to govern themselves, and that the spoliation with which they were reproached had been forced upon them by the treachery and insubordination of the native owners. Between these two views of the same facts no compromise was possible. That the Irish, being what they were, should bear the chain impatiently was inevitable from the constitution of their nature. It was no less certain that England neither could nor would recede from the position which she had taken up, and that, before the Irish were allowed to be independent, they must win their independence with the sword. Those who could look beyond the moment, saw plainly that the struggle which was recommencing must end at last in a conflict between the two nations. Religion might serve as a veil, for the present, over more vital questions ; and the religious question itself might conceal its real nature behind the spurious plea of toleration. But, even under the extravagant supposition that James



could undo the Reformation and make England Catholic again, no English Parliament would or could consent that the settlers of English race should be dispossessed, and that Irish rebellion, after its neck had been so hardly broken, should be re-established in its old strength. Tyrconnell meant to take back the lands. England, whether Catholic or Protestant, was sooner or later certain to interfere, and insist that it should not be. For the moment, however, the Irish were the winning side, and the game went merrily along. Clarendon resigned the sword, paying a melancholy but honourable compliment to the loyal hearts of the Protestants, who were now to be made victims. Tyrconnell, when he was installed, talked grandiloquently, as James had done in England, of the immortal principles of religious liberty, which were to be the rule of his government; principles which, in practice, were to mean that those who had been punished for a detestable rebellion, which they were pleased to describe as a religious war, were to be indemnified for their sufferings at the expense of those who had punished them. Chancellor Porter, as unavailable for the purpose in view, was dismissed with Clarendon. His office was given to Sir Alexander Fitton, whose qualifications were, the having been convicted and imprisoned for forgery, and whose merit in the King's eyes was his being a convert to Popery. Protestant officers were weeded out of the army; and the power of the sword being now Catholic, Chief Baron Rice set himself, as he described it, to drive a coach and horses

through the Acts of Settlement: such statutes, he said, 'being contrary to natural equity, could not oblige.'<sup>1</sup>

The dispossessed families put in their claims. Outlawries were reversed as fast as the courts could give judgments; and decrees of restoration were made out so rapidly that it was said, 'if Rice had been left to himself he would, in a few years, have given away most of the estates of Protestants in Ireland without troubling Parliament to attain them.'<sup>2</sup> Fitton said publicly that, among forty thousand Protestants, there was not one who was not a traitor, a rebel, and a villain. The merchants and manufacturers being Protestants, and in consequence governors of the corporate towns, the corporation charters were revoked and cancelled, and new charters issued, by which the Viceroy took to himself the nomination of the aldermen. There was to be no bloodshed; the work could be done by forms of law, and there was no need of it. To make assurance more sure, a second search for arms was made in the Protestant houses. Their horses, swords, and pistols were demanded, with a threat that, if they were found with firearms in their possession for the future, 'their lives and goods should be at the mercy and discretion of the soldiers.'<sup>3</sup> The army, being Catholic, lived at free quarters on the Protestant farms. Tories, lately outlaws and bandits, received commissions as officers in the King's service; and over those who had set

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<sup>1</sup> *Life of William III.* HARRIS, vol. ii. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> HARRIS, vol. ii. p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Protestants in Ireland.* ARCHBISHOP KING.

prices on their heads, they were left to work their will as they pleased. Tenants of Protestant landowners were bidden not to pay their rents, for the land would soon be their own. Tyrconnell proposed to receive the money meanwhile, to be used in the service of the King.

So went matters all through the year 1687, and for  
1688 ten months of 1688, when the news came that the Prince of Orange had landed, and that the King was a fugitive. What now was to be the fate of Ireland? To those who believed in the forms and shadows of things the English revolution made no difference, save that it might precipitate the severance of the two countries, which the Irish so intensely desired. The Dutch usurper might be driven out again, and the second revolution come to nothing like the first; but should it be permanent, the King of England need not be King of Ireland. Ireland might remain loyal to James, though England disowned him. They could fight against their old enemy, sheltered under the same veil as the insurgents of 1641, keep still within the limits of the constitution, and overthrow the detested Protestantism, while professing themselves the devoted subjects of their lawful sovereign. The members of the Established Church could not oppose them. The bishops and clergy, in the exaggeration of Royalism, had committed themselves to an opinion that, 'under no pretence, might men take arms against their king.' Tyrconnell, tyrant as he might be, was still the representative of the lawful prince. To resist Tyrconnell was to imitate the crimes

of Cromwell, whom it had been their special function to anathematize. Secured against half the English settlers from this singular reason, the fanatic Catholics believed themselves safe in defying the rest. The Ironsides, thanks to Bramhall and Jeremy Taylor, were beyond the Atlantic. Except in Ulster, among the persecuted Presbyterians, the English could count on no friends in Ireland; and, without a party among themselves, would be too weak to resist the reviving energy of the native race.

There were others, however, longer-headed, like Chief Justice Keating, on whom the experience of the last rebellion had not been thrown away. Keating warned Tyrconnell in council that in grasping at the whole, the Catholics would lose in the end all that had been left to them. Tyrconnell himself hesitated till he saw how events would turn in England, and how James would be received in France. He wrote plausible letters, affecting a desire to come to terms. William, with England in confusion, was peculiarly reluctant to court an Irish quarrel, and for some months there seemed to be a chance of a peaceful solution. The fanatics carried the day at last. Some Irish regiments had been sent to England to support James. They had thrown down their arms, and their officers were under arrest. General Hamilton, who was one of them, volunteered his services to William to negotiate with Tyrconnell. His offer was accepted. He returned to Dublin to tell the Viceroy that William's cause was desperate, and that in a few

weeks, or months, James would be again on the throne. The letters from France were equally encouraging. Cannon were coming, and powder and muskets and money; perhaps a disciplined French army.

The uncertainty was at end. William's overtures were construed into a consciousness of weakness, and Catholic Ireland was called under arms. The property of the Protestant farmers and gentlemen was generally seized. Cows and sheep were driven off; 'all was gone in three months, to the value of a million of money.'<sup>1</sup> What could not be consumed or carried off was destroyed, that 'the damned Whigs might not have the benefit of it.' The corn was cleared from the farm-yards. A guard of soldiers surrounded the bake-houses, that no Protestant might purchase a loaf.<sup>2</sup> The less reticent Catholics said publicly, 'that they designed to starve half the Protestants in Ireland and hang the other half, and that it never would be well till it was done.'<sup>3</sup>

Passionate language was not to be construed literally, but 1641 was not forgotten. When the Irish had the bit between their teeth they were unrestrainable savages; and this much they had determined, that, by fair means or foul, Ireland was to be swept clean of heretics. It was a less easy matter than Catholic enthusiasm anticipated.

The siege of Derry, almost the only heroic piece

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Protestants in Ireland.* ARCHBISHOP KING.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Dr. King was an eye-witness.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

of story which the long chronicles of Ireland can boast, does not need a fresh description. At the end of 1688, an anonymous letter was addressed to Lord Mount Alexander, telling him that there was to be a second massacre. Whether such a design had or had not been formed, the story seemed only too credible; and in Ulster, where, though generally disarmed, the Protestants were numerous, they formed associations for general defence. The garrison of Derry had gone to England among the troops which Tyrconnell had despatched to James. Lord Antrim was sent with another regiment to take its place. The inhabitants, proud of their virgin city, which, through the ten years of the last civil war, had kept their streets clear of the Irish enemy, decided to refuse to admit him till they had taken security for the character of his soldiers. Ezekiel Hopkins, the Episcopalian bishop, counselled submission; but the Derry Protestants were mainly Calvinists, whose respect for kings and bishops was not excessive. The apprentices closed the gates in Antrim's face; and though they were willing to admit half-a-dozen companies to take charge of the town, they stipulated, successfully, that half at least of the men should be of the same religion as themselves.<sup>1</sup> 1689

Enniskillen had been no less resolute. The gentlemen throughout Ulster armed their tenants as well as they were able, and re-established their disbanded militia. James, it was now known, was coming in

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<sup>1</sup> March, 1689.

person to Ireland; and Tyrconnell, to secure the North, at once sent down a strong force to disperse these incipient gatherings and seize the two towns. The militia, under command of Colonel Lundy, a feeble and perhaps treacherous officer, was easily broken up. Lundy himself fled to Derry; and finding the fortifications consisting of nothing but a half-ruined wall, insisted that defence was impossible. English ships, with two regiments, were in the lough. Lundy assured the English officers that, if the men were landed they could not be fed; and that the town was totally untenable. They sailed away, and left Derry to its fate; and Lundy prepared to surrender.<sup>1</sup> James himself was approaching in person to receive the capitulation. After many difficulties, he had obtained at last the promised assistance from France. He had landed at Kinsale on the 12th of March, bringing with him Marshal Rosen, several hundred officers for the Irish regiments, cannon, ammunition, and arms for 10,000 men, with the Count of Rosen, an experienced general, to command the army. He passed through Dublin on the 24th, when writs were issued for a Parliament; and he went on to the North, to return and open the session in May, when the Ulster troubles should have been put down.

Now was again witnessed what Calvinism, though its fire was waning, could still do in making common men into heroes. Deserted by the English regiments, betrayed by their own commander, without stores and

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<sup>1</sup> April.

half armed, the shopkeepers and apprentices of a commercial town prepared to defend an unfortified city against a disciplined army of 25,000 men, led by trained officers, and amply provided with artillery.<sup>1</sup> Expresses were sent to England for help. Lundy, to escape being torn in pieces, fled for his life. Major Baker and Dr. Walker, a clergyman of the Established Church, who had raised a regiment and seen service against the Irish, were voted into the command. Every assault failed. The siege was turned into a blockade. They were cut off from the sea by a boom across the river. Fever, cholera, and famine came to the aid of the besiegers. Rats came to be dainties, and hides and shoe-leather were the ordinary fare. They saw their children pine away and die. They were wasted themselves till they could scarce handle their firelocks on their ramparts. As a shameful example of cowardice, an English fleet lay for weeks in the lough, the lazy ships visible from the church towers. There, before their eyes, were meal-sacks ready to be landed, hundreds of brave men ready and eager to come to their help, all lying enchanted by their commander's cowardice. Still indomitably they held on through three miserable months, till, on the 30th July, the Dartmouth frigate came in with two provision ships and an English officer who feared other things worse than danger and death. The boom was broken; the relieving squadron found their way to the town. The Irish camp was broken up in despair, and Derry was saved.

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<sup>1</sup> April 17.



## SECTION VI.

ENNISKILLEN had been as successful as Derry. There too the Irish had failed. But the odds were desperate, and unless an army came from England, the end could not be far off.

Meanwhile James had met his Parliament, not bringing with him the keys of Derry to grace the opening, but leaving Rosen to complete a conquest of which every day he looked for the news.

On the 7th May the Lords and Commons of Ire-  
 1689  
 May 7 land assembled in Dublin. By the constitution, the Irish Parliament could only meet when summoned by the King of England, and James was King of England no longer. By the constitution no measures could be submitted to them which had not been considered and approved by the English Council. Plead as they would that James was still King of Ireland, having neither abdicated that crown, nor done any act which could be construed into abdication, they were *ipso facto* in revolt against England. The value of their Parliamentary proceedings would depend on whether their swords were at length sharp enough to vindicate the independence which they had assumed. The meeting was itself an act of rebellion, and every person who took part in it was compromised. As between the two countries, the position was simple. If the Irish arms were successful, they were loyal sub-

jects. If they were defeated, they were insurgents, and were again liable to forfeiture. The moral bearings of the question were less simple than the political. The Episcopal Church of Ireland was still praying for James as lawful King of England, and denouncing William as a usurper. The lawful King being present among them, might be held to carry with him his constitutional powers. The maintainers of the divine right were in hopeless embarrassment. In practice, however, whatever this Parliament might do could be only provisional. If William were to remain sovereign of England, Poyning's Act must be repealed on the field of battle before the statutes of an Irish Parliament could become law.

In prudence the Catholic leaders should have waited till the fighting was over, without committing themselves to acts which, unless they were victorious, might prove dangerous to them. But they were too impatient to bear delay. Ireland had an opportunity of declaring her free opinion of England's dealings with her, and was determined to use it.

The Parliament which passed the Acts of Settlement was almost exclusively Protestant. The Parliament which met to destroy them was almost as exclusively Catholic. The Protestant nobles had fled to England. Had Lord Clarendon called a Parliament, the Upper House would have contained ninety-six lay Protestant peers, with twenty-four bishops, and twenty-two Catholics. Fifteen outlawries were reversed. New Catholic peers were created. Boys under age

were called to serve. Thirty-six in all presented themselves in Dublin on 9th May. Among them were nine Protestants only: four bishops—Munster, Ossory, Limerick, and Cork, whose attendance was insisted on to give a semblance of fairness to the proceedings; and five lay Protestant peers—the Earls of Barrymore, Clancarty, and Longford, Viscount Ross, and Lord Kinsale. The rest were Catholics of the most prominent type, the majority of them legally disqualified, and called on to sit for the special business intended for the session. The House of Commons consisted, with five or six exceptions, of nominees of Tyrconnell. Elections could not be free in the heat of a revolution, and the sheriffs of counties and the mayors of the towns being necessarily Tyrconnell's creatures, the returns were managed without difficulty. Two hundred and thirty members were sent up. Six Protestants, perhaps by accident, perhaps for appearance, found places among them. It was inevitable, under the circumstances, that the most extreme men should be generally chosen. So bitter were the Catholic electors of Dublin, that Gerrard Dillon, the Prime serjeant, though of unimpeached bigotry, was rejected by them because he had bought an estate under the Acts of Settlement, and he sate for Mullingar.

Immediate steps, it was well understood, would be taken for the repeal of these detested Acts. Chief Justice Keating, still confident whither all this was tending, made a last appeal to the King's better understanding. The time was unpropitious, for Derry was

still closely blockaded, and the Irish were in a passion of elation at the defeat of an English squadron in Bantry Bay, which was sent to intercept the French ships that had brought James to Kinsale. There were principles of justice, however, not to be disregarded with impunity, on which Keating ventured to insist. The soil which had been taken from the Irish owner was bare as nature made it. Thus it had been when sold to the English. But it was no longer the same country. The wild common had been fenced in, the barren morasses turned to pasture, and ample stone mansions had taken the place of cabin and castle. The farms carried as abundant stock as farms in England; and up and down were established manufactories, by which the meanest peasant had been enriched and civilized. All was panic now, but the panic in its extent and magnitude showed how great the interests had become which were about to be hazarded. The English settlers had bought their lands in good faith, with a state title, and the honour of the government as their security. They had made Ireland the most improved and improving spot of earth in Europe, and, if the Acts of Settlement were repealed, they would be irretrievably ruined. The Chief Justice implored the King to pause before encouraging or allowing so dangerous and iniquitous a measure.<sup>1</sup> To James himself the justice of such an argument must have been obvious. But James was swept away in the torrent of an Irish

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<sup>1</sup> Address to King James in behalf of the Protestants, by Judge Keating. KING, Appendix, p. 22.

revolution which he detested, while he was obliged to humour it. The improvement of their estates did not diminish the anxiety of the old owners to return to possession. If landlords in ordinary times may appropriate without scruple the fruits of their tenants' industry, the lawful proprietors saw no occasion for Quixotic virtue in resigning rights which the change of times had restored to them, because spoilers and aliens had raised the value of the lands which they had stolen. The settlers should receive back their original purchase-money, and ought to feel themselves happy in being so equitably dealt with.

The bill for the repeal was introduced on 4th June. The preamble, going back over the history of 1641, retorted the charge of treason on the Government. It accused the Protestants of having provoked the revolt, to take advantage of the forfeitures. It charged the Lords Justices with ambition, avarice, traitorous combination with Puritan sectaries to murder the Catholics, with an effrontery which seems natural in Ireland, but would have been impossible in any other country in the world. The guilty and the innocent were made to change places, and the Irish Catholics presented themselves as the injured victims of a perfidious conspiracy. On these grounds the representatives of the loyal and pious men who had lost life and lands in a holy cause, claimed to be restored to the possessions of their fathers.

Anthony Dopping, Bishop of Meath, had the extraordinary courage to rise in the House of Lords and

protest. He took the ground of Keating. The present proprietors, he said, had bought their estates in good faith. They had sold their interests in England, and had committed their fortunes to Irish soil. Out of the wild, barren Ireland of the past they had made a thriving, growing, and prosperous country. It was pretended that, in justice to the old owners, they could not be allowed to remain, and they were promised an indemnity for their losses. He ventured to hint that promise was not fulfilment, and that the assessment was not likely to be equitable, when they were themselves to be allowed no voice in it. To destroy so many loyal and useful subjects was the height of impolicy. The revenue would return to nothing, trade and manufactures would perish, the plough would turn the soil no longer, and the inhabitants would feed not on bread, but on one another.

‘My Lords,’ he concluded, ‘either there was a rebellion in this kingdom, or there was not. If there was none, we have been very unjust all this time in keeping so many innocents out of their estates. God forbid I should open my mouth in defence of so grave an injustice. But, then, what shall I say to his majesty’s royal father’s declaration, who owns that there was a rebellion, and in pursuance of that opinion passed an act to secure such as should adventure money for the suppression of it. . . I take it for granted that there was a rebellion, general or partial. If general, then all were guilty, and none can claim their estates. If partial, we ought to

distinguish, and not confound, the nocent with the innocent.'<sup>1</sup>

The Bishop was not likely to be listened to with patience by an assembly which had met with a foregone conclusion. The fatal policy of the late reign, the retrogression from the steady principles of Cromwell, and the concession of part of their demands to men who challenged all as their legitimate right, who regarded instalments of so-called justice as a weakness which they despised while they accepted it, was bearing its legitimate fruit. The Restoration found the three provinces exclusively Protestant, the rebellious elements shut up in Connaught, and in Connaught disarmed of power for mischief. 'Justice to Ireland' had flung bridges over the Shannon, had allowed the returning stream once more to flow over the land, and this was the result.

The repeal was passed. Every one who held an estate under the Acts of Settlement was dispossessed. The old proprietors were reinstated in their inheritance, and made the happy owners of the wealth which others had created there. The ejected colonists were to receive compensation when they could get it. The Irish Catholics were thus restored to all which they had lost by the rebellion of 1641. There remained to be recovered the forfeitures from the Elizabethan wars and the six counties of the Ulster settlement. The process taken upon these was as complete as it was summary. Almost all the leading Protestants in

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<sup>1</sup> KING's *State of the Protestants in Ireland*. Appendix, p. 23.

Ireland were comprehended by name in one sweeping act of attainder. Two thousand six hundred land-owners, commencing with the Archbishop of Dublin and the Duke of Ormond, were declared guilty of adherence to the Prince of Orange, and to have forfeited their estates by treason. Two months' respite only was allowed to such of them as were still in Ireland to present themselves in Dublin and take their trial. Each member of the House of Commons gave in a list of his Protestant neighbours, and guilt was assumed in the absence of proof of innocence. The habitual absentees were struck out, because, as residing in England or Scotland under the usurpation, and not having returned to Ireland to defend their natural sovereign, their treason stood confessed. Those who had fled since the disturbances, betrayed a consciousness of guilt, and were to be accounted guilty till they cleared themselves. The conditions of 1652 were reversed. Then all Catholics were held responsible for the rebellion of 1641; now all Protestants were partisans of the Prince of Orange. The question at issue was whether England had or had not a right to govern Ireland, and the right depended on the relative strength of the two countries. If the Irish could succeed in driving the invaders out by force, history would see only legitimate retribution in the proceedings of James's Parliament.

Another act swept away the personal property, goods, chattels, stock, debts, bonds, arrears of rent of every person who was in arms against King James, or



who, by the previous statutes, was declared to have forfeited his real estate. Schools and colleges were transferred to Catholic management; the churches and the Church property were given back to Catholic bishops and priests. Poyning's Act was repealed, and Ireland was declared independent; while, in harmony with the language which James had ingeniously used to advance Romanism behind principles which were abjured in every Catholic country in Europe, laws interfering with liberty of conscience were declared repealed. Liberty of conscience might be safely conceded in a country where, if the present measures could be maintained, no Protestant was likely to remain.

The session, so momentous in its consequences, closed on 20th July. Eleven days later, Derry was relieved.

## SECTION VII.

THE Parliament had finished its work, and, so far as words could accomplish it, had achieved a revolution. Ireland was again Irish. It remained to be seen whether the sword would ratify the statute roll. For a time they had reasonable hopes that fortune would at last favour them. On the 13th August, Duke Schomberg, with a nominal force of 20,000 men, landed in Down and took Carrickfergus. But, under the training of Marshal Rosen and the French officers, the Irish displayed capacity as soldiers. Supplies continued to pour in from France, and Schomberg's army, comprised of English, Dutch, Germans, and French Huguenots, ill-furnished and worse-disciplined, lay idle in Ulster, disabled with sickness, vice, and division. Neither Schomberg, nor Schomberg's master, understood the Irish problem. The clergy of the Established Church were called Protestants, but, notwithstanding attainders and confiscations, were still everywhere praying earnestly for James, and denouncing the new usurper. The siege of Derry had shown that all the Protestants were not of the same mettle; but Schomberg's officers did not care to distinguish, and treated all alike 'as enemies to King William's government.' 'The best of them,' it was said, 'had either basely complied with King James, or cowardly deserted their country.' The soldiers lodged at free

quarters, plundering as they pleased, and living in riot and debauchery.<sup>1</sup> The Irish army itself showed in favourable contrast to the discreditable force which had come, it seemed, for no other purpose than to bring the revolution into contempt. Forty years had passed since Cromwell landed on the same errand. The cause was unchanged, but the men who were its champions were of another breed and soul. In Schomberg's camp 'religion was but canting,' and whoredom and drunkenness the soldiers' natural amusement.<sup>2</sup> The defenders of Londonderry and Enniskillen, few though they might be, were more formidable to Rosen and Tyrconnell than the loose companies of swearing ruffians who were dying of the rot, through their own vices, in the Belfast Hospital.

The situation could not continue. The English Parliament grew impatient. A little more and France, finding James succeed better than had been expected, might throw its power seriously into the scale, and Ireland might be irrecoverably lost. Schomberg was so sharply censured that William found it necessary, as Cromwell had found, to take charge of the war in person.

With a fresh army composed of better stuff, though of the same motley materials, he crossed the Channel on 14th June, 1690, and joined the camp at Carrick-

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<sup>1</sup> See the very remarkable letter of Dr. George, Schomberg's secretary, to Colonel James Hamilton. | PLOWDEN, vol. i. Appendix, p. 45. <sup>2</sup> Ibid.

fergus. Following Cromwell's example, he resolved to strike at once, and with all his force. A few days were spent in reorganizing Schomberg's troops, and then, with 36,000 men, he commenced his march on Dublin. Against the advice of his best officers, for fresh troops from Brest were daily expected, and Louis was meditating a descent on England in William's absence, which would distract him, and, perhaps, compel his return, James determined to risk an immediate engagement. The Irish, he said, were now confident; he had the advantage of numbers; and to abandon Dublin, and retreat as the Council of War advised, might dispirit and divide them.

The action of 1st July, on the Boyne, must be passed over, like the siege of Derry and Enniskillen, with the briefest notice. The result only concerns us here. The Irish, though with every advantage of position, exhibited once more their unvarying inability to encounter the English in the field in their own country. The patriotic ecstasy which had flowed so freely in torrents of rhetoric, congealed at the sound of cannon. They did not even make a creditable stand. James, who had shown personal cowardice, hid his disgrace in flight, and stole back to France. William advanced to Dublin, but lingered purposely in following up his success, in the hope that Tyrconnell would now throw up the game. Tyrconnell made no sign, and he went on to Kilkenny. His discipline was now as stringent as Oliver's. He saw some of his men once plundering an old woman; he struck one on the spot with his

cane, and promptly hanged the whole party. But with the Irish he was studiously lenient. He promised publicly that, if they would lay down their arms, all that had been done should be forgotten. When no response came, he turned westward, made a feeble attempt upon Athlone, passed on, and sate down before Limerick. But he betrayed no intention, and he felt no desire, to break down by violence a people whom, in his inexperience, he believed it possible to win by indulgent terms. He refused to look upon them as rebels when they were in arms for one whom they regarded as their natural sovereign. He either did not or could not see that the essential enmity was against England and the English settlement; and he shrunk from pushing a war to extremities, which must then be followed by fresh forfeitures.

The reality of the situation was obscured by the confusion of political feeling, and instead of ending the campaign promptly and decisively, and reviving Cromwell's policy, which ought never to have been abandoned, he imagined, as many an amiable person has imagined before and since, that the native Irish had been handled irrationally and cruelly, and needed only kindness to become faithful subjects. Neither should the Irish race be dealt with hardly, if William could help it, nor the Irish religion. James's Parliament had enacted liberty of worship. It would be a shame if the champion of Protestantism was less tolerant than an assembly of Catholics; and he was purposely dilatory, as if to enable them to offer condi-

tions which he could grant. Sir Arthur Ashton imagined that he could hold Drogheda for many months. Cromwell stormed Drogheda the day after his cannon opened on it. The same spirit would have taken Limerick had the spirit been there. But William lingered till the rains forced him to raise the siege; and he returned to England, leaving Tyrconnell another year for reflection. Lord Sidney,<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Porter, the late Chancellor, and Thomas Coningsby,<sup>2</sup> who had stood by William at the Boyne and staunched his wound when he was hit, were left as Lords Justices, and were all well inclined to moderate counsels. The army went into winter quarters, and Baron Ginkel remained in command.<sup>3</sup>

Cork was taken from the sea in September, and the south and east of Ireland submitted; but Athlone and all the country west of it continued in Tyrconnell's hands. He held Connaught, Clare, Limerick, and Kerry; and with the sea open behind him, and the Shannon in his front, he trusted to the tide of events in Europe and to possible revolution in England, or at any rate to a continuance of assistance from France. The English Parliament met on 2nd October. Large money grants were necessary for the war with France; the Irish expenses had been enormous; and naturally and inevitably the House of Commons insisted that

<sup>1</sup> Brother of Algernon Sidney, great grandson of Sir Philip, created afterwards Earl of Romney.

<sup>2</sup> Created Lord Coningsby of Clanbrassil.

<sup>3</sup> Godard de Ginkel, one of William's most distinguished officers: created for his Irish services Earl of Athlone.

the cost should not be borne by the English taxpayers; the Irish lords and gentlemen who made a fresh reconquest necessary must pay for it, and a million at least of the estimates must be charged, as in 1642, on the anticipated confiscations. William's disposition to leniency was understood; but there would be no escape from an Act of Parliament; and a bill of attainder was introduced against all who had been in arms.

Confiscations were now complicated with difficulties unknown in earlier times. Estates were mortgaged, charged with settlements, and otherwise encumbered in their tenures. Creditors petitioned, and raised difficulties, and a clause was introduced which would have reduced the compulsory forfeitures by two-thirds, and left the King free to grant what terms he pleased to those who had not yet surrendered. The House of

1691 Commons did not choose to be put off with evasions and excuses. But the bill was stopped by the Lords, to leave William's hands unbound.

The King desired most earnestly to be allowed still to hold out hopes to the Irish of favourable consideration. 'Touched by the fate of a gallant nation, that had made itself the victim to French promises,' says Sir Charles Wogan, 'the Prince of Orange, before the decisive battle of Aghrim, offered the Irish Catholics the free exercise of their religion, half the churches of the kingdom, half the employments, civil and military too, and the moiety of their ancient properties.'<sup>1</sup> Sir

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir Charles Wogan to Swift.' *Swift's Works*, vol. xviii. p. 10, &c.

Charles Wogan was Tyrconnell's nephew; he affects to speak from personal knowledge, and he adds, that 'these proposals were to have the sanction of an Act of Parliament.' If William ever made such an offer, he was promising more than England would have allowed him to perform; but had Tyrconnell possessed ordinary sense, there can be no doubt at all that he might have secured conditions which would have left the Catholics materially unweakened, and free to resume the struggle when a fresh chance offered. When the siege of Limerick was raised, he went to France, attended by Sir Richard Nagle and Chief Baron Rice, to ascertain if he was to have further support. France, unhappily for him and his cause, gave him just so much help as encouraged him to persevere, not enough to give him a serious chance of success. He returned up the Shannon in January 1691, with three frigates, clothes, arms, ammunition, and a little money. Louis, like every foreign ally on whom the Irish have been rash enough to lean, was contented that they should make a brief diversion for him, whatever might be the consequence to themselves.

One more campaign was thus inevitable, with fresh bloodshed and fresh expense. Ginkel's army assembled in May at Mullingar; Mackay brought reinforcements from Scotland; Sir Richard Cox sent some spare regiments from Cork; and Ginkel advanced to Athlone, at the beginning of June, with 18,000 men. The bridge was broken; the Irish were strongly posted on the Connaught side. There were divided counsels



in Ginkel's camp and a talk of retreat. It happened that the spring had been dry; the river was unusually low, and could be crossed by wading a short distance off. At six o'clock in the evening of 30th June, when the Irish were in no suspicion of an attack, Mackay waded over with 2000 men. Covered by the smoke of the muskets, he seized the end of the bridge and repaired it; and before dark the whole army had crossed. The castle capitulated; the Irish fell back among bogs and streams upon Aghrim Hill, five miles from Ballinasloe, and prepared for the final battle which was to decide the fate of the country.

At last they appeared really conscious of the greatness of the stake which was being played for. They were commanded by St. Ruth, a distinguished French officer and a profound and passionate Catholic. Masses were said and prayers offered in all the regiments. St. Ruth addressed the officers as if they were Crusaders engaged in mortal conflict with hell and heresy. Remembering the disgrace of the Boyne, they took a solemn oath not to forsake their colours, and to their honour it must be said that most of them kept their word. Not without reason does the anniversary of the battle of Aghrim keep so fresh a hold on Irish memory. If the conquerors look back upon it with pride, that day<sup>1</sup> was also the only one on which the Irish people fought on their own soil, for their own nationality, with the courage which so uniformly distinguished them under other flags and on other fields.

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<sup>1</sup> July 12, 1691.

Sunday, the 12th July, dawned thick and hazy; a damp fog lay spread over the marshes, which did not lift till late in the afternoon. At half-past four, with five hours of daylight remaining, the mist blew off and the English advanced. English properly they were not. English regiments were intermixed with Danes, French Huguenots, Scots, Dutch, Brandenburgers, and Anglo-Irish Protestants, the fitter to try an issue which, however disguised, was an episode in the long European struggle for liberty of conscience.

The battle was long doubtful. The ground was trenched in all directions, and the ditches were lined with Irish sharpshooters, who stood their ground bravely, and again and again Ginkel's columns, rushing forward to close with them, were driven back in confusion. Once St. Ruth believed the day was his own, and he was heard to swear that he would hunt the Saxons into Dublin. Almost immediately after he was killed by a cannon-ball. The Huguenot cavalry, led by Henri de Ruvigny, made a charge, behind which the English infantry rallied. At last, late in the evening, the Irish gave way, broke up, and scattered. Few or no prisoners were taken, and few were reported wounded. Those who escaped escaped, those who were overtaken were made an end of. Seven thousand men were killed before darkness and rain ended the pursuit.

The wreck of the defeated army divided; part went to Galway, part to Limerick, where the last act

of the drama was to be played out. Galway's turn came first. Whether William did or did not make the offer before the battle, which Sir Charles Wogan says he did, that he had instructed Ginkel to wind up the war on conditions easy to the Irish, the articles allowed to Galway showed plainly. An English fleet was in the bay, and commanded the approaches from the sea. The town might have been completely invested by land, and compelled to surrender at discretion. Obviously this was not William's desire. The French regiments, and such of the garrison as preferred to continue the struggle, were allowed to march away to Limerick, with drums beating and flags flying. The governor, mayor, sheriff, burghers, freemen, all the inhabitants, or reputed inhabitants, for the word was construed with the utmost latitude, received a free and complete pardon for all offences which they had committed since the accession of James the Second. The officers of the regiments which capitulated, whether present or absent, were secured in the possession of the whole of such estates as they had enjoyed under the Acts of Settlement. Catholic gentlemen within the walls were permitted to retain their arms; Catholic barristers there were allowed to continue to practise. The priests of the town received protection for person and property; and a promise was given that their religious services, so long as they were conducted in private, should not be interfered with by the penal laws. Cromwell 'meddled with no man's conscience,' but declared 'that the mass should not be allowed

where the English Parliament had power.' William, though himself nominally a Calvinist, had unbounded faith in the principles of toleration, and believed that the Irish temperament was capable of being conquered by generosity.

The surrender of Galway carried with it the submission of Connaught. Limerick remained. It had baffled William the year before. The season was waning, the summer wet, and there had been no second 'massacre of Drogheda' to show that resistance might be dangerous. Ginkel approached at leisure. Tyrconnell, who was in the town, either worn out by fatigue, sick with disappointment, or else poisoned, for this too was suggested, died before he came under the walls, advising the Irish to make peace with so liberal a conqueror, and not to sacrifice themselves any longer to French ingratitude. The fleet came round from Galway and sailed up the Shannon. The same terms were offered which Galway had accepted; but there was a hope for more extended concessions; and Sarsfield,<sup>1</sup> who had succeeded St. Ruth in command, undertook the defence.

Either Ginkel was purposely slow, or else was culpably careless. He arrived before Limerick at the end of August. For three weeks he left Sarsfield's

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Sarsfield, created Earl of Lucan by James the Second. The Sarsfields were an old Anglo-Norman family of the Pale. Patrick, father of Sarsfield who commanded at Limerick, was one of the Catholic proprietors who were restored to their estates under the Act of Settlement. His eldest son, William, married a natural daughter of Charles the Second.

communications open with the county of Clare, and it was not till 22nd September that the town was completely invested. A parley was then demanded, and Sarsfield named his conditions.

He demanded almost the very concessions which were mentioned by Sir C. Wogan—a general indemnity; a confirmation to the Irish owners of all the estates throughout Ireland, which they had held before the revolution; religious liberty, with a priest in every parish, recognized by the law; the admissibility of Irish Catholics to all employments, military and civil; a full and entire equality with Protestants in every right and privilege, with a promise that the stipulations accepted by Ginkel should be confirmed by an Act of Parliament.

It was obviously impossible that terms such as these could be conceded. William himself might have consented, and an Irish Parliament, elected like that which had met two years before at Dublin, might have been found to ratify them. But the conduct of the Irish in that Parliament had proved that between them and the Protestant settlers there could be nothing, if they were in a position of equality, but an internecine war. Nor could any English Parliament have listened to an arrangement which would have left the settlers at the mercy of their enemies; the revolt absolutely unpunished; and the English taxpayers burdened with the cost of a reconquest, which at any moment might have to be repeated. Ginkel replied, that although he was a stranger to the laws of Eng-

land, he was certain that what Sarsfield asked for could not be granted. He had Sarsfield at his mercy, but he declined to push his advantage. In return, he drew himself, as a sketch of what might be allowed, the celebrated Articles of Limerick, round which so many heartburnings were to rage.

There was a mystery about these Articles which has been left unexplained. They were accepted by the Irish leaders as sufficient, yet, in the form in which the Irish leaders signed them, they were less favourable than in the draft first offered by Ginkel.<sup>1</sup> The alteration was explained afterwards as an oversight. This only is certain, that William had directed Ginkel generally to grant the utmost that the English Parliament would allow; that, by some means or other, the concessions were at the last moment materially reduced; that Sarsfield signed them in this reduced form; and that William endeavoured afterwards, without success, to restore them to their original state.

The material stipulations, on which the doubts afterwards arose, were these:—

1. That the Roman Catholics of Ireland should enjoy such privileges, in the exercise of their religion, as were consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the reign of Charles the Second; the King promising, as soon as his affairs would permit, to summon a Parliament in Ireland, and to

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<sup>1</sup> The allusion will be explained in the next page.

*endeavour* to procure the Roman Catholics such further security in that particular, as might preserve them from disturbance on account of their religion.<sup>1</sup>

2. The inhabitants of Limerick, and of every other garrison town in possession of the Irish, the officers and soldiers in arms, under any commission from King James, in the counties of Limerick, Cork, Kerry, Clare, Sligo, and Mayo, and—so the words stood in the original draft—*all such as are under their protection in the said counties*, should retain such estates, interests, and privileges as belonged to them in the time of Charles the Second, or at any time during which the laws of Charles the Second were in force. They should retain their personal property untouched also, and be at liberty to pursue their several trades and professions as freely as before, subject only, they and all other Catholics in the kingdom who made their

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<sup>1</sup> This article, intended obviously to confer religious liberty, might mean much or little, as it was interpreted. The 2nd of Elizabeth, which was still in force, prohibited the exercise of the Catholic religion, and so far the article gave the Catholics nothing. On the other hand, the law of Elizabeth had rarely been acted on. Under Charles the Second the practice had varied. At one time the Catholic Archbishop had been received in his robes at Court. There was a chapel and a priest in every parish, where, for the greater part

of the reign, mass had been said without disturbance, and Catholics had been sheriffs and magistrates. There had been an interval, however, when the English Parliament took alarm; religious houses had been closed and priests had been imprisoned. The article might be understood to refer to either of these periods, and convey full toleration, or none at all; while the word 'endeavour,' which might be only a form of courtesy, might also leave an opening to Parliament to refuse its sanction.

submission, to take the simple Oath of Allegiance, as modified by the English Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

The sixth article passed a sponge over the plunder and violence which the Protestant farmers and gentry suffered under at the beginning of the war.<sup>2</sup>

So long as the second of these three articles contained the contested words, printed in italics, it conceded nearly all for which Sarsfield had asked. Very many of the Catholic gentry being in the army, were protected as commissioned officers. The estates of most of those who were absent, and yet were compromised in the insurrection, were in the counties thus carefully particularized; and thus it might be said, that nearly every Catholic of consequence, with a disposition to be dangerous, would be covered by the broad vagueness of the word 'PROTECTION.'

Inexperienced in Ireland, and in the spirit of the not very profound saying that

He who overcomes  
By force, hath overcome but half his foe,

William was expecting to win by kindness those whom he had defeated in the field, and had studied rather to spare their pride, and not to make their overthrow too complete. The fact, however, was not to be concealed, that in the Articles as signed by the

<sup>1</sup> 'I, A. B., do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to their majesties King William and Queen Mary.'

<sup>2</sup> See the articles in *PLOWDEN*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 49. There were

forty-two articles in all—thirteen civil and twenty-nine military. The military articles referred to the detailed winding up of the war; the remainder of the civil articles contained particular provisions of no historical importance.



Irish generals the protection clause was not present. The King, in his confirmation of the Articles in the ensuing February, said, that 'the words had been casually omitted by the writer;' that 'the omission was not discovered till the Articles were signed, but was taken notice of before the town was surrendered;' and that 'the Lords Justices, or General Ginkel, or one of them, had promised that the clause should be made good, since it was within the intention of the capitulation, and had been inserted in the rough draft.' He therefore for himself 'did ratify and confirm the said omitted words.'<sup>1</sup>

The deliberate assertion of William ought not to be lightly questioned, yet it is difficult to credit that the accidental omission of a paragraph of such enormous consequence should have passed undetected. The more probable explanation is, that the Lords Justices, who had arrived at the camp when the treaty was in progress, narrowed down the King's liberality, and extorted harder terms than he had prescribed or desired.

Once more, in conclusion, the conditional character attached to the first of the Articles was extended to the whole. The Lords Justices and the General undertook 'to use their utmost endeavours that the treaty should be ratified and confirmed in Parliament.' They bound themselves to 'use their endeavours;' more they could not do; and if words had a meaning, there was still reserved to the legislature a power of revision.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Confirmation of the Articles of Limerick, February 24, 1692.' PLOWDEN, vol. i. Appendix.

## SECTION VIII.

HAD the Articles of Limerick and Galway been carried out in the spirit in which they were framed, it is sometimes pretended that the reconciliation between the English and Irish races, which unhappily remains incomplete, would then have been effected. The allegiance of the conquered would have been given freely to a sovereign who, when they were at his mercy, had forborne to punish them. The past would have been forgotten, and the Catholics, grateful for a toleration which they were conscious that they had not deserved, would have settled down contentedly under a government which left them their religion undisturbed by persecution, and uninsulted by penal legislation.

If I am unable to share this opinion, it is because William's policy, however natural, and for himself, pressed as he was by his difficulties with France, convenient, was but a repetition of an experiment which had been tried many times and had invariably failed. To allow the Irish to manage their own affairs, so far as was consistent with a bare allegiance to the British Crown; to interfere and punish when indulgence had produced its unvarying consequences, and then to tread over again the same round, in the hope that Ireland had learnt her lesson and would at last recognize forbearance, had been the principle on which Irish affairs had been administered from Henry the Seventh's

time downwards, and can be traced distinctly through successive stages of failure, from the moment when the Tudor sovereigns first became unconscious of their responsibilities for the condition of their dependency. If Ireland was not again in flames for the Pretender, and was now, for the first time in its history, to enjoy a century of political peace, it was because the experience of the past had *not* been thrown away, and the Irish Protestants were less ignorant than William of the country which had fallen suddenly into his hands. Fiercer ages, and nations less humane than the English, would have ended the Irish difficulty by methods which in the end would, perhaps, have been less productive of human wretchedness. Such races as could neither defend their liberty with the sword, nor would submit when defeated to live within the bounds of order, have been transported generally to other lands, or been steadily decimated till the unruly spirit has been broken. William of Orange need have been driven to no such excess of severity, for the main root of Irish disaffection was exposed and visible, and at that conjuncture might have been easily excised.

There were peculiar conditions at that particular moment, such as had never occurred before, and such as have never returned, by the skilful use of which the two islands might have been completely and permanently united.

The conquest first ought not to have been left imperfect. Treaties, however vague, raise claims which if unsatisfied leave festering sores; and had there

been a will to do it, the entire untrammelled reduction of Ireland would have been accomplished by William far more easily than by Cromwell. The religious condition of Europe, and the attitude especially of the ally whose assistance Tyrconnell and James had unsuccessfully called in, would have enabled and permitted the English Government, without real injustice, to have made Ireland a Protestant country. It is conveniently forgotten by Catholic declaimers against the iniquity of the penal laws, that in Catholic countries the laws against Protestants were more severe than any code which either England or any other Protestant country has enforced against Catholics. In Spain and Italy there was no liberty of religion. In France it had just been withdrawn by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The existence in those countries of Protestant communities was held inconsistent with the safety of the State. Nonconformists were imprisoned, exiled, deprived of their estates, or put to death. No schools or churches were allowed to them to teach their creeds in ; not so much as six feet of ground in which their bodies might rest when dead, if they died out of communion with the Church. Catholic writers express neither regret nor astonishment at these severities, and reserve their outcries for occasions when they are themselves the victims of their own principles. They consider that they are right and that Protestants are wrong ; that in consequence, when Protestants persecute Catholics, it is an act of wickedness ; when Catholics persecute Protestants, it is an exercise of lawful

authority. The modern Liberal finds excuses for the Catholic which he refuses to the Calvinist. He perceives, or thinks he perceives, that in all creeds there is both truth and error, that the essentials are to be found in each, that mistakes of opinion are venial ; and he considers that the Protestant in claiming a right to think for himself ought in consistency to have allowed the same right to others. He, too, forgets that these Latitudinarian reasonings are of recent growth ; that earnest Protestants in past centuries, men of the highest intellectual ability, believed the doctrines of the Catholics to be poisonous lies. To a Sir Isaac Newton the Pope was the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse ; and the feeling which made the Protestant an object of horror to the orthodox Catholic, made the Catholic equally detestable to the sincere Protestant. He would have preferred to confine his opposition to reason and conscience ; but persecution beget persecution in self-defence ; and deprived those who commenced such methods of their right to complain, when their own measure was retorted on them. To inflict penalties on opinion becomes, in some cases, legitimate in the sense that war is legitimate. It is a recourse in good faith to force, to determine questions which argument is not allowed to solve.

But, beyond this general excuse, there were features in Irish Romanism which might at that time have justified any government in making a final end of it. At the bottom of every rebellion in that country since the Reformation, were to be found the Catholic bishops

and clergy. In the eyes of the Catholic Church the lawful sovereign of Ireland was the Pope. Insurrection was an act of piety; those who fell in it were martyrs; and crime in a holy cause lost its character, and became sanctified. The lines of the two creeds were identical with the lines of loyalty and disloyalty. Irishmen who became Protestants were good subjects, English settlers who became Catholics were drawn into the ranks of the disaffected; and any Catholic sovereign who, before the 18th century, was at war with England, could calculate with certainty on a party in Ireland to make a diversion on his side. Catholic writers pretend that England was the aggressor in proscribing the mass. In no Catholic country in the world had so much toleration been shown for Protestants, as had been shown to Catholics in Ireland. Each successive provocation had been repaid with larger indulgence, and always with more miserable results. The Act of Uniformity was the law of the land, but Elizabeth never attempted to enforce it beyond the Pale; and within the Pale, by the Catholics' confession, it slept after the first few years. The bloody rebellions of Shan O'Neil, of the Earl of Desmond, and of the Earl of Tyrone, each encouraged by the clergy, each connected with a design to sever Ireland from England, were the rewards of forbearance; yet after each insurrection, and always, save when the country was actually in flames, the successive governors of Ireland were prohibited from meddling with religion. The titular bishops exercised their jurisdiction without

interference. The religious orders, friars, monks, and nuns, remained in their houses wherever the Irish chiefs were pleased to maintain them. The parish clergy said mass, first in private houses and castles, and then in chapels and churches of their own. As the country grew more quiet under James the First and Charles, they throve with the progress of prosperity, and had never been more numerous or less disturbed.

The consequence was the massacre of 1641. When it was yet undecided, whether the rising was to be a bloody one, the most ferocious counsels were traced to a Catholic abbey. The civil war, with all its miseries, was protracted by the interposition of the Pope; and the fiercest resolutions against peace, and the most determined irreconcilability with England, was with the party of the Nuncio.

During the ten years of Cromwell's government, the priests and their works were at an end. Ireland was quiet, and, had Cromwell left a son like himself, must in another generation have been Protestant. The Restoration brought back the old system. Half, or nearly half, the Catholic gentry were replaced in their estates. The Catholic hierarchy was re-established. Catholic prelates received a quasi recognition from the State, and the Oath of Supremacy was dispensed with as a condition of admission to the service of the State. Protestant Dissenters were prosecuted and imprisoned. Catholics were connived at and smiled upon. At last, when James the Second was meditating the overthrow of English liberty, he turned for help to the Irish

Catholics. The whole power of the State, civil and military, was placed in their hands, and they instantly snatched the opportunity for their own purposes. They attained every Protestant of consequence, and reclaimed the land to themselves; and while they proclaimed liberty of conscience, they took practical measures which would have destroyed the English settlements, and in a few years have rooted Protestantism out of the country.

They appealed to arms to maintain their usurpations, and they failed. The Catholic clergy had proved that, so far as lay in them, Ireland should never be at rest till they had their own way. What was there in the circumstances of Ireland that, when it was once more subdued, the English Government should have hesitated to apply the same rule there, which Louis the Fourteenth was finding necessary for France? The utmost stretch of toleration cannot reach to the endurance of a belief which makes rebellion a duty, and teaches temporal obedience to some other sovereign as an article of faith. No government need keep terms with such a creed when there is power to abolish it. To call the repression of opinions which had issued so many times in blood and revolt, by the name of religious persecution, is mere abuse of words; while at that time the best minds in England really believed that, besides its treasonable aspects, the Roman Catholic religion was intellectually degrading and spiritually poisonous.

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repression which was actually made, lamed as it was by impediments thrown deliberately in the way by politicians, and with the flaw upon it of the breach of promise made conditionally in the Articles of Limerick, prove that with wisdom and firmness the end could then have been completely attained, and Ireland been made a Protestant country as entirely as England and Scotland. Had the Catholic bishops been compelled in earnest to betake themselves elsewhere, had the importation of priests from abroad been seriously and sternly prohibited, the sacerdotal system must have died a natural death, and the creed have perished along with it.

But repression could not go alone. If in so vital a matter the Government interfered with the natural tendencies of the people, it was bound most strictly to give them every other opportunity of real improvement. Industry, in the first place, ought to have been encouraged in all directions by all legitimate means. Infinite wealth was in the Irish soil if only it was cultivated; rare virtues were in the Irish character if only it had fair play; and industry was the school in which both might have been developed. England had no natural advantages which Ireland did not share with her. The seeds of trade and manufacture which had been sown by James the First and Cromwell, though blighted by the Navigation Act, were not dead, and if let alone would revive. The persecutions in France were driving out fresh swarms of Protestant artisans to whom Ireland, were trade and manufactures free,

would be a welcome retreat. Scotch and English capital was waiting to flow over there, and workmen, who aspired to better their condition by emigrating, and would prefer a nearer home than America. No country in the world had a more brilliant commercial future opening before her, if the opportunity had been wisely used.

Again ; experience had shown, that the form of Protestantism known as the Anglican Establishment, though entitled to remain on equal terms with other reformed communities, ought not to have retained a power of persecuting those who had carried out more thoroughly the principles of the Reformation. The creation of the English mind, arising out of the disposition towards compromise which is so marked an English characteristic, the Established Church had so far failed in England itself, that the legal toleration of Dissent had become a necessity. An assumption of exclusive authority was more mischievous in Ireland, where the conditions of the compromise did not exist, where the Episcopalians formed but a third of the Protestant body, and where there was an enemy to be daily encountered, against whom they were the least effective antagonists. The more robust forms of Protestantism furnish no converts to Popery. Anglicanism, a limb incompletely severed, remains attached to the old system by veins and ligaments, which allow passage to the *virus* of sacerdotalism ; it has always been the favourite nursery in which Rome has sought and found recruits, and has been singularly ineffectual

in making converts in return. A mind sufficiently in earnest about religion to prefer truth to falsehood listens only to teachers who speak with emphasis and certainty, who do not think and say, but feel with warmth and passion. Before a man can persuade others to accept him as a guide, he must know his own mind, and be ready with a *Yes or No*, on the questions with which his hearers are perplexed. On the points which divide Protestant from Romanist, the Anglican answers *Yes and No*. Is there a Christian priesthood? There is and there is not. Is there a real presence in the Eucharist? There is and there is not. Is baptism necessary to salvation? It is and it is not. Such hesitating modes of thought may be prudent and cautious, but they will make no converts. The only Protestants who could make an impression on the Catholic peasantry were the Presbyterians, and it was in them that the strength of Irish Protestantism lay. The bishops had preached passive obedience, had looked favourably on the Catholics, and had been bitter and violent with the Nonconformists. In the day of trial the Nonconformists of the North had been found at their posts; while the clergy of the Establishment continued to pray for King James. The least that the Presbyterians had deserved was an ample toleration. If Ireland was to be a sanctuary for Protestant refugees, the utmost possible freedom should have been allowed them; the more complete the Protestant, the more secured his allegiance to England, the less danger of a repetition of the fatal mistake which had

driven out the Cromwellians. Repression too, it should have been remembered, could not last for ever. The Catholic peasantry were not to be expelled. Their families could not grow up in Atheism; and, if they were not converted, sooner or later, their liberty must be given back to them. A respite only could be secured at best, and if the opportunity were lost it might be lost for ever.

And there was another matter of scarcely less vital moment. The lands of the Irish chiefs had not been taken from them that they might be owned by noble lords and gentlemen residing the other side of the Channel, and acknowledging no further connexion with their estates beyond receiving rents for them. The theory of attainders rested on the duties attaching to property. If no such duties existed, the penalty was absurd and irrational. The absentee grievance was a very old one, and less easy to deal with than in earlier times. Under the feudal system the responsibility was visible, and the claims of the State were understood and admitted. When the State sold lands to raise money, or allowed men to sell to one another, it became necessarily more indulgent to neglect. But if, on the one hand, London speculators, or Crown favourites, could not be prevented from acquiring large estates in Ireland, on the other the entire object of the confiscation was defeated if the population were left unshepherded; or, if for the landlord's convenience, the sons and grandsons of the old owners were left in possession as tenants retaining their local influence,

still to all intents and purposes the practical rulers ; and of the conquest, the only evidence was the exasperation of the returning rent-day. An ownership which consisted merely in robbing a poor country of a percentage of the fruits of its industry was no benefit, but a curse ; and although it might have been impossible to revive the laws of Henry the Eighth, a wise settlement of Ireland would have included a tax so heavy on all rents sent out of the kingdom, as would have compelled proprietors to sell their lands to others who would make their estates their home.

Lastly, as including in itself every other condition, as, at that time, the warmest object of desire with every intelligent Anglo-Irishman, the separate constitution should have been abolished, the two should have been countries reunited, as Cromwell had designed, and thus, better far than by any separate detailed condition, the Irish been admitted to the full participation of every British privilege. So long as there were two centres of political life, and two legislatures, the idea of a separate nationality and of a separate interest persistently survived ; and absenteeism of the most mischievous kind could not be prevented. To the great peers, hereditary statesmen like the Shelburnes, a public career in the larger country was an irresistible temptation. The young barrister, conscious of real powers, could not but prefer the ampler field of Westminster Hall for his energies and his abilities. A man of letters or an artist would be drawn to London as by a magnet. All the influences which could govern

healthily and nobly the public tone of Irish life would be lost to her; and the provinces and the capital, the legislature, the learned professions, the arts and sciences—all which constitute the strength and greatness of a nation, would be left to the second best. The nationality itself, perversely maintained, would survive, perpetually conscious of ill-usage, deficient in every element of moral health and life, to brood over its wrongs; and the mixed races, the conquerors and the conquered, the Saxon and the Celt, would grow together as they had grown before, in a common interest and common resentment.

Certain principles, easily defined, had they been steadily acted on at the close of the civil war, would have made by this time the woes and the wrongs of Ireland a thing of long-forgotten history.

A complete subjugation of the native faction untrammelled by articles of capitulation.

The resolute exclusion of a Catholic hierarchy, and stringent laws, stringently enforced, against the introduction of priests from abroad.

Entire toleration of all Protestant communities, and an effective system of national education.

Sharp penalties against absentees; a legislative union of England and Ireland; the abolition of the Irish Parliament, the separate government, and the separate bars; and a complete neutralization of all classes of Irish as English citizens.

How England on all these points, treating Ireland as a conquered country which she had no longer

occasion to fear, and might therefore safely misuse, deliberately left undone what she ought to have done,—refused the union when Ireland asked for it,—destroyed Irish manufactures,—ruined her trade,—incurred the odium of penal laws while destroying their efficacy—demoralized the entire people—and at last, by the most ingenious complication of mismanagement, exasperated Protestant and Catholic, Saxon colonist and indigenous Celt, into a common revolt, will be told in the following pages.

## BOOK II.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE OPENING OF THE PENAL ERA.

##### SECTION I.

SIR THOMAS CLARGES, in a speech in the English House of Commons on the state of Ireland,<sup>1</sup> said that 'King James's false dice were still played with there.' The question which the politicians who had charge of the new settlement asked themselves was, not what they could best do to re-establish order and industry, but how the dice could so be thrown that they might make their own fortunes.

Marking, as it does, a turning-point in Irish history, the campaign of 1691 is usually considered to have decided beyond reversal the fate of the Irish Catholics; yet the meaning of great events, however legible in their consequences, is often concealed from the actors in them. Notwithstanding Aghrim and the surrender of Limerick, the Lords Justices<sup>2</sup> either doubted their power to hold the Catholics down, or they had received

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<sup>1</sup> December 14 1689.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Sydney, Lord Coningsby, and Sir C. Porter.



orders to indulge and protect them. Under the terms of the Limerick convention, half the Irish army left the country for France, intending to come back when a new chance offered. The rest returned unmolested to their estates, or were allowed to enter William's service. Coningsby and Porter were credited with having removed the obnoxious clause from the second Limerick Article, which, if sustained, would have left the rebellion unpunished. Yet the loyal colonists were dismayed to perceive that the Catholics were handled as tenderly as ever. Catholic gentlemen who had been in James's army were admitted to, or continued in, the commission of the peace. Catholic officers were taken back into the army, and the oaths were altered to suit their consciences. They swore allegiance in the simple form prescribed by the English Parliament; <sup>1</sup> but the abjuration, which the law equally required, of the Pope's pretended right to interfere with subjects' allegiance, was dispensed with in their favour. <sup>2</sup> The reversals of outlawries, which the war had suspended, recommenced. The disputed clause in the treaty was treated as binding, and Catholics covered by it received their pardons. The army, its wages being in arrear, was again billeted upon the Protestant gentry and the half-ruined farmers. The English House of Commons had insisted that the expenses of the war should be paid, in part at least, out of the sale of confiscated

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<sup>1</sup> 3 & 4 William and Mary, cap. 2. *English Statutes.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Articles of Impeachment against Lord Coningsby and Sir C. Porter before the English House of Commons, 1693.'

properties. It seemed as if the Government deliberately intended that there should be no properties to sell.

Had there been no Limerick or Galway Articles, 3,921 Irish resident owners would have been liable to forfeiture, and fifty-seven absentees. The estates amounted to over a million plantation acres; their market value to two millions and a half sterling.<sup>1</sup> The acts of James's Parliament had thrown the whole country into confusion. The old owners had made haste to take possession, and half the properties in the country had changed hands. Commissioners were appointed to hear claims, and reinstate the expelled Protestants. They were accused of showing favour to the Catholic interlopers, and of raising difficulties in the way of the rightful proprietor. Of the lands newly lapsed, a quarter was at once restored to the Catholics under the Articles of Limerick and Galway. Sixty-five great Irish proprietors, whom the Articles could not be made to cover, were reinstated by special favour from the Crown. The vast domains of the late King, the grants to Tyrconnell, and the estates of others who were not to be pardoned, were distributed, under letters patent, to courtiers and favourites with the most lavish and indiscriminate generosity.

The secrets of these transactions were imperfectly

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<sup>1</sup> Exact figures: — Plantation acres, 1,060,792; rental, 211,623*l.*; total value, 2,685,130*l.*, taking a inheritance at thirteen.—*Report of the Commission appointed by Parliament to enquire into Irish Forfeitures.*

ravelled out on subsequent enquiry. 'When we touched on this subject,' reported the Parliamentary Commissioners in 1699, 'we found difficulties too great to be overcome, most of these matters being transacted in private.' They discovered, however, that Lord Raby received 2000*l.* to procure the pardon and restitution of Lord Bellew.<sup>1</sup> Lord Albemarle<sup>2</sup> 'consented to receive' 7500*l.* from Lord Bophin for a similar service,<sup>3</sup> and these were but two instances out of many of a similar kind. Considerations of pretended merit were alleged in excuse of grants to favoured individuals. Under a general plea of 'service done' Lord Sydney received fifty thousand acres, and Lord Albemarle a hundred thousand. A hundred and thirty thousand were given to Bentinck, whose deserts were held to be so self-evident that no explanation was so much as offered.<sup>4</sup> Coningsby, as one of the Lords

<sup>1</sup> Walter Bellew, who commanded a troop of horse in Tyrconnell's regiment. His father, created by James the first Lord Bellew, was mortally wounded at Aghrim.

<sup>2</sup> Van Keppel, Lord of Voorst, created Earl of Albemarle by William.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Bophin was not restored, and it is therefore uncertain whether Van Keppel actually received this scandalous bribe. 'In pursuance of this agreement,' says the report, 'a letter was sent to the Lords Justices to go before the Commission of the Court of Claims in favour of Lord Bophin, to have him ad-

judged within the Articles of Galway. Nothing being done therein, a bill was drawn, to be transmitted to England, restoring Lord Bophin to his estates and blood, the consideration suggested being to educate his children Protestants, and to set his estate to Protestants. The bill was brought into the House of Commons in Ireland, and the House resenting their being used to support a clandestine bargain, rejected,' &c.

<sup>4</sup> Bentinck commanded a regiment at the battle of the Boyne, and behaved well there.

Justices, rewarded himself handsomely for his official labours, and forty thousand acres were bestowed on Henri de Ruvigny, created by William Earl of Galway. These noblemen had contributed something towards the reduction of the country on which they were quartered so liberally; but credit could be allowed for more doubtful services in favour of those who had private access to the dispensers of the royal bounties. James Corry<sup>1</sup> 'obtained a heavy mortgage and an estate,' 'the considerations mentioned in his letters patent being that his house was burnt, and that he furnished the garrison at Enniskillen with provisions and materials to the value of 3000*l.* at his own expense.' When the commissioners enquired into the merits of this gentleman, it appeared that he had given no assistance whatever to the garrison at Enniskillen; that in the town of Enniskillen 'he had declared publicly, that he hoped to see all those hanged that took up arms for the Prince of Orange;' and that his house had been burnt by the Protestant soldiers as a punishment for his disloyalty.<sup>2</sup> The worst case was Lady Orkney's. This lady's sole claim to consideration lay in her being the daughter of Sir Edward Villiers, Knight Marshal of Charles the Second's household, and of Lady Villiers, who had been governess to the Princesses Mary and Anne. To her were given the enormous Irish estates of the late King. To William these estates were represented as worth 5000*l.* a year. They consisted,

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<sup>1</sup> Ancestor of the Earl of Belmore.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Commission.

in fact, of a hundred thousand acres of the finest land in Munster. The rental was 26,000*l.* a year. The selling value at the time of the grant 332,000*l.*<sup>1</sup>

To King William himself the Irish Protestants were enthusiastically grateful. He had come in person to fight their battle, and he had been wounded in their cause. The descendant of a line of heroes, he was upholding on the Boyne, on the Thames, and on the Meuse, almost alone, the cause for which his great ancestor had given his blood. Wherever he went he freely risked his own life, and he was known to be incapable of being influenced by mean considerations. But he was a stranger in England; of Ireland and Irish history he was utterly ignorant; and he had to rely for information on persons with whose character and motives he had not leisure to acquaint himself. It was too plain that, notwithstanding all that she had gone through, Ireland was to be again sacrificed. Corruption and interest were to reign supreme. The wound was to be skinned over in the old false way, and Catholic to be still played against Protestant as if 1641 were forgotten, and the Tyrconnell Parliament had never been.

False dice indeed! The cry ran through the country that Ireland was betrayed. It was said that the Articles of Limerick were a trick; that they were invalid till the Irish legislature had sanctioned them, and that sanction they should never have. Anthony

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Commission, and see *Parliamentary History*, January 15, 1700.

Dopping, Bishop of Meath, who had stood up so boldly against James, preached in Christ Church that 'peace with a people so perfidious as the Irish' was childishness. 'They observed neither article nor oath longer than was for their interest.' 'They were a conquered people, and as a conquered people only could they be safely treated.' Dopping's name was struck from the list of Privy Councillors; but the ferment was not allayed. A correspondence came to light between two Catholic bishops in the late reign, showing how determined was the animosity of the Irish against the English, how utterly powerless was the moderate Catholic to control the national fanaticism. The creed made no difference in the opinion of these prelates. An Englishman, whether Catholic or Protestant, was regarded as Ireland's enemy; a Saxon, orthodox or heretic, would rather see Ireland occupied by his own countrymen, of whatever religion, than by the native race. The land, therefore, must be taken back, the alien expelled, and Ireland be Irish once more. Loyal to a Catholic King of England she might be, if she had her own laws, and if her lands were her own people's. Loyal to England she could never be.<sup>1</sup>

This was the feeling with which the colonists knew that they had to reckon; and to hope that by time or indulgence it would be soothed or  
1692  
obliterated were to those who understood the country the most idle of dreams.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Bishop Mahony to Bishop Tyrrell, March 8, 1690.' Printed among the Appendices to Archbishop King's *State of the Protestants*.

Supplies meanwhile were needed to pay the army ; and for this and for other reasons Parliament must now meet. Lord Sydney was appointed Viceroy. Writs were issued for an election, the Catholics being constitutionally disabled by the English Act,<sup>1</sup> which made the taking the Abjuration Oath and the Declaration against Transubstantiation conditions of a seat. Little mystery was usually possible with the intended business of an Irish session. The heads of the Government bills were sketched in council, sent to England for approval or alteration, and returned to the council before Parliament began. The feeling of the country was ascertained by conversation, or by direct enquiry ; and, for weeks before the opening, the State correspondence was generally filled with discussions of the prospects of the meditated measures.

This time, so little conscious was Sydney or his advisers of the humours which they were to encounter, that not a misgiving was entertained. When the members began to collect in Dublin, they were informed that a bill would be introduced to confirm the Articles of Limerick in the extended form in which the King had ratified them ; and that the Acts of Settlement were to be re-enacted, with further concessions to the Catholics. But it was intimated by the Castle officials that there was to be no discussion ; ‘ both measures had been amply considered by the Privy Council ; the two Houses were called up only to ratify what was already determined ; and, if any

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<sup>1</sup> 3 & 4 William and Mary, cap. 2.

scruple was made, there would never again be a Parliament in Ireland.'<sup>1</sup>

The brief and stormy session opened on the 5th of October, 1692. Never had the temper of a public assembly been more profoundly miscalculated. Lord Sydney's speech was short and general. 'The King,' he said, 'had risked his own person to give Ireland quiet; and Ireland, he hoped, would remember in turn the duties which it owed to its sovereign. A country so advantageously situated for trade, and so favoured in its soil, could need nothing but peace and good laws to make it as fertile and flourishing as any of its neighbours.' The address in reply was conciliatory. Both Houses expressed their most hearty thanks to William for delivering them from the Papist tyranny. They passed a Recognition Act with special expressions of gratitude. They admitted, without difficulty, that the kingdom of Ireland was dependent on, and inseparably united to, the Crown of England.<sup>2</sup> An act passed in Charles the Second's time,<sup>3</sup> to encourage the immigration of Protestant French and Flemings, was renewed; an additional clause being attached, giving them the untrammelled exercise of their religion,<sup>4</sup> and the rights of freemen without the disabilities of Nonconformity. So far the session went smoothly, but so far only. The pent-up indignation then burst out, and the entire policy of the Government was denounced in a torrent of declamation. The

<sup>1</sup> 'Account of the Parliament of 1692.' *MSS.* Ireland. Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 4 William and Mary, cap. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 14 & 15 Charles II. cap. 13.

<sup>4</sup> 4 William and Mary, cap. 2.



Lower House drew a petition to the Crown complaining of the reversals of outlawries, the misappropriation of the forfeitures, the pardons and protections which prevented Protestants from recovering their farms, the idle and mischievous attempts at reconciling the irreconcilable. If England intended to govern Ireland on these principles, she was not to count on the assistance of the Irish Parliament. William, or William's advisers, conceived perhaps that they, and not the colonists, had conquered the Catholics, and that they therefore were entitled to dictate the concessions which were to make the Catholics into good subjects. The colonists, on whom the immediate peril fell, and who understood well that they must either rule or perish, declined to be consenting parties to so wild a scheme. To ask them, in their present humour, to confirm the Articles of Limerick, was to ask them to sign away their lives. To pass the first article was to give Romanism a legally recognized existence. The second article, with the omitted clause, 'would open a passage to the Papists to repossess themselves of the estates which they had forfeited.' Instead of showing a readiness to confirm the Articles, they required to be told by what means 'the additional paragraph had been maintained.'<sup>1</sup> They quarrelled on every line of the new Act of Settlement. The Government introduced a bill to declare void the acts of the late pretended Parliament. This, it might have been

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<sup>1</sup> 'Petition of the Irish House of Commons to the Crown, October, 1692.' MSS. Rolls House, Ireland.

thought, they would accept without objection; but they threw it out, because it proposed that those acts should be simply cancelled; and the Commons 'found it for their majesties' service and the honour of the Protestants of Ireland, to preserve the record of the Irish barbarity, which would have been taken off the file had the bill passed.'

Still more dangerously, they voted that persons commissioned by the Crown to receive the forfeited estates had broken their trust, and had fraudulently diverted them to their own use. They ordered that these persons should be prosecuted, even though they were members of their own House; and, when the Money Bill came on, the immediate object of their assembling, they would not, indeed, 'in the present exigencies of affairs,' refuse a supply altogether; they voted part of what the Government asked; but, as an assertion of independence, they threw out another part, because 'the bill had not taken its rise in their House;' and they carried a vote, that it was the undoubted right of the Irish Commons to prepare their own Money Bills, and not receive them from the Crown. Finally, when the Mutiny Act was presented as of pressing importance, and with a special request that it should be unopposed, they threw out this also, in resentment at the admission of Catholic officers into the King's service.

Instead of the complacent assembly which Sydney had expected to meet, he found himself in the midst of a nest of exasperated hornets. He prorogued the

Parliament till the spring with an angry rebuke. Specially offended with the interference with the Money Bill, and unconscious of the sore point on which he was treading, he 'regretted,' he said, 'that they who were under so many obligations to be loyal should have entrenched on the rights of the Crown in  
 1693 rejecting a bill which had not originated with themselves.' He pronounced their vote to be 'contrary to the laws of their constitution,' and required his protest to be entered in the journals in vindication of the prerogative.

The hereditary revenue was unequal to the current expenses. Without supplies the army could not be paid, and must continue to live at free quarters. Money must be raised in some way, and it appears, from Sydney's language, as if the alternative contemplated by the Government was to govern Ireland directly as a province. The King, he said, must resolve whether the Parliament should meet a second time. For himself he thought the lesson had done them good, and he was willing to try the experiment again; but he was not disposed to yield a step of his own policy. 'If they are as foolish and knavish as they were,' he wrote to Lord Nottingham, 'they must not sit a day.' 'If they are so mad and absurd as not to consent to what is proposed for their own good, if they are afterwards undone, I suppose they will not be pitied.'<sup>1</sup>

About the Catholics Sydney had speedy reason to

<sup>1</sup> 'Sydney to Nottingham, Jan. 5 and Jan. 25, 1693.'

discover that the Parliament had been wiser than himself. There was this difficulty then and always in schemes of conciliation, that they could not be acted on consistently, and were liable to be continually reversed under sudden alarms. Lord Sydney had invited Catholics into the army. A report rose in the winter of 1692-3, that a French invasion was to be looked for in the spring. At once he confessed himself embarrassed 'with a prodigious number of officers, who, without doubt, would do mischief when it was in their power.'<sup>1</sup> He had wished to extort from the Legislature a formal toleration of Romanism. He found himself within a few months obliged to recommend the suppression of all Catholic convents, schools, and colleges, and the expulsion of the Catholic hierarchy; he issued an order for an indefinite arrest of priests and regulars,<sup>2</sup> and followed it by a warrant<sup>3</sup> for the dismissal of the Catholic officers and the substitution of Protestants.

The mistake which he had made became more apparent from the action of the Parliament in England. The revolution had given a fresh impulse to Protestantism, and revived the traditions of the past generation. The massacre of 1641 was inseparably connected with Irish Popery in every Protestant mind;

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<sup>1</sup> It is uncertain whether he was alluding to officers in the King's army, or to Tyrconnell's officers, who were allowed to retain their estates under the Limerick Articles. In either case the Govern-

ment policy was equally condemned.

<sup>2</sup> *MSS.* Record Office, Ireland, January, 1693.

<sup>3</sup> May 30. *MSS.* *Ibid.*

and, outside the Court circle, there was as much impatience at Westminster as in Dublin at the incompleteness with which Ireland was being handled. The complaints which Sydney had silenced were taken up at St. Stephen's, and the Irish grievances were embodied in a second petition, which could be less easily disposed of. The King was reminded of a promise which he had made to reserve the forfeitures for the consideration of Parliament. The Bishop of Meath and Sydney's secretary, Mr. Pulteney, were sent for and examined in committee; and the indignation went so far that Sir Charles Porter and Lord Coningsby were actually impeached. Coningsby boldly defended himself. Most Protestants, he said, considered that the proceedings now called traitorous had saved Ireland. The Commons decided that there was not matter to sustain a charge of treason; but both his conduct and Porter's were censured as illegal and arbitrary.

The King's Government discovered that they must consider with more courtesy the opinion of Ireland. Sydney was recalled, and the Parliament with which he had quarrelled was dissolved. The first attempt at settlement had failed disastrously. A fresh beginning was to be made with new men; and Sir Henry Capel, a distinguished member of the English House of Commons, raised to the peerage as Lord Capel, was sent over to heal the wounds which had been so recklessly opened.

## SECTION II.

Two years were allowed to pass before an Irish Legislature was again assembled. The Government was embarrassed by want of money, and great <sup>1695</sup> questions were left open which the Protestants were eager should be closed. Both sides were disposed to a compromise when their heats cooled down, and the situation could be discussed dispassionately. By judicious handling, by taking into the service of the Crown the favourites of the House of Commons, and by private assurances that their wishes would be considered more respectfully, Capel at last brought about a temper which encouraged him to issue writs for a fresh election. Robert Rochfort, a son of an officer of Cromwell's, and Alan Brodrick, who, in the last Parliament, had led the opposition, were made Attorney and Solicitor-General. Porter was retained as Chancellor, perhaps as a last chance of preserving the wide construction of the Articles of Limerick; but his general policy was discredited, his views were abandoned, and his power gone. The Court had perceived at last that Ireland could be governed only by the Protestant gentry, and with some return to the principles of the rule of the Protector.

The Commons, it was understood, were willing to leave in abeyance 'the sole right' of initiating money bills. In return, the Government promised measures

for the repression of the Catholics, which on that side would relieve the anxiety. A new difficulty was now likely to rise from the leaven of Jacobitism in some members of the Established Church, left behind by the traditions of Bramhall and Jeremy Taylor. The Churchmen had fared no better than the Presbyterians at the hands of the Parliament of James; but, if they feared the Catholics, they hated the Nonconformists. There was a latent wish with some of them that the Catholics might not be weakened beyond a point where the Ormond and Strafford games might be played over again; and that, when the lawful sovereign came back, he might still find a loyal Ireland to bear him up against dissent and revolution.<sup>1</sup>

The ground, however, had been well prepared. Capel was accused of having used undue influence. He appealed to his own Parliamentary life in answer. 'For thirty years he had taken a freedom in voting,' he said, and 'the liberty he claimed for himself he allowed to others.' He had secured, at any rate, the two most formidable opponents. 'Without Rochfort

<sup>1</sup> Capel, writing to the Duke of Shrewsbury on the 16th May, 1695, was sanguine that he had removed all difficulties. 'I have,' he said, 'endeavoured with all industry to prepare matters in order to a Parliament, and do really find almost a universal disposition in the Protestants to behave themselves dutifully without insisting on the sole right.'

On the 18th June, the horizon was less favourable. Two bills

were coming from England, one for disarming the Catholics, another for 'restraining foreign education.' 'The first,' Capel said, 'if passed will secure the Protestant interest; the other, the Protestant religion in this kingdom. The Irish Papists will be solicitous to overturn any foundation that may be laid for preventing their future rebellions, and may, perhaps, find Protestant friends here to help them in it.'—*MSS.* Record Office, Ireland, 1695.

and Brodrick,' he admitted that he would have failed.<sup>1</sup> The session opened on the 29th August. The Commons promised in their address, that they would avoid heats and animosities, and do their best to pass useful measures, which would give quiet to the country. Money was voted, and 'the sole right' question was not raised. The Articles of Limerick were left unapproached. The King himself, perhaps, was unwilling to precipitate a decision which was sure to be unfavourable. But the objections to annulling the proceedings of James's Parliament were not maintained. It was decreed to have been an unlawful assembly, and its measures to have been void. The Commons consented, in express words, that the journals should be cancelled, and the acts passed there should be erased from the roll, 'that no memorial might remain among the records, of the proceedings of that assembly.'<sup>2</sup>

By an Act of Henry the Eighth, which had been revived by Elizabeth, every incumbent in Ireland had been required to keep a free school in his parish for instruction in English; and every diocese was to have its public Latin school. Performance had lagged terribly behind promise. Few parish schools or Latin schools had Ireland seen of Protestant institution. But now at last the dream was to become a reality. The Act was revived. The magistrates were directed to see to the obedience of the clergy. The judges on

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Capel to Secretary Vernon, November 23 and December 7.' *MSS.* Record Office, Ireland, 1695.

<sup>2</sup> 7 William and Mary, cap. 3. *Irish Statutes.*



circuit were to report if magistrates were negligent; and, a proper education being thus provided by the State, the Catholics were forbidden to have schools of their own at home, or to send their children to learn disloyalty and Popery abroad, under penalties of outlawry and forfeiture.<sup>1</sup>

The positive part of this Act was so gross a mockery, that the prohibition remained necessarily dead. While three-fourths of the benefices in Ireland were without incumbents, and the stipends of the few who were scattered about the country sufficed barely to keep them alive, to order them to provide schools for the whole population was to order a simple impossibility. As little, so long as there was no substitute within reach, could the Catholics be compelled to leave their children to grow up savages. The Irish Parliament awoke later to a keener sense of their responsibilities in this matter, and nobly redeemed their neglect; till then statutes such as this were worse than idle; remaining minatory merely, like scarecrows which the birds soon learn to laugh at, they served but to teach the Irish once more a lesson which they had no need to learn, that laws were made to be disobeyed.

A disarming Act was more rational and more effectual. The measure which the Catholics, in their day of power, had inflicted on the Protestants was retorted on themselves. By the 5th of the 7th of William and Mary all licences to bear arms were revoked, and the Catholics were ordered to deliver up whatever guns,

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<sup>1</sup> 7 William and Mary, cap. 10. *Irish Statutes.*

muskets, or ammunition they possessed. Lords and gentlemen within the Articles of Limerick were permitted, on taking the oath of allegiance, to retain their swords and pistol-cases, and to keep a fowling-piece to shoot game. This was the sole exception to a measure which implied that from them alone in Ireland was violence to be anticipated. Magistrates were empowered to search their houses. Horses it was assumed that they did not need, except for agriculture; and, therefore, they were forbidden to possess horses above five pounds in value. Any Protestant might demand and take a Catholic's horse from him, on paying five guineas to the nearest magistrate for the owner's use. Finally, gunmakers and sword-cutlers, that the very knowledge of the art of making dangerous weapons might be taken from them, were not allowed to receive Catholics as apprentices; and they themselves were required, before practising their trade, to take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, and subscribe the statutory declaration against Transubstantiation.<sup>1</sup>

On the breaking up of James's army the Tories and Rapparees, from which it had been recruited, fell back to their old haunts and their old work. The forests and mountains were again peopled with political banditti, who carried on a guerilla war against their conquerors. 'Out on their keeping,' as the legal phrase described them, they lived, like their forefathers, on plunder, but on the plunder of the invader. They

<sup>1</sup> 7 William and Mary, cap. 5. *Irish Statutes.*

beset the high roads. They came down at night on the outlying farmer, houghed his stock, burnt his haggard, or cut the throats of himself and his family. To put these villanies down by a regular police was found impossible, 'the Popish inhabitants choosing rather to suffer strangers to be robbed and despoiled of their goods than apprehend the offenders, the greater part of whom were people of the same country, and harboured by the inhabitants.'<sup>1</sup> If Ireland was to be a civilized country brigandage must in some way be ended; and the methods hitherto found effectual were again resorted to. The baronies were made responsible, and the Catholic inhabitants were required to make good any loss or injury inflicted within their boundaries: persons presented by grand juries as 'on their keeping' were to be proclaimed; and, unless they surrendered to take their trials, they were outlawed. To conceal or harbour them was made felony, and any one who would bring in a proclaimed Tory, dead or alive, might claim a reward of twenty pounds.<sup>2</sup>

These measures formed the most important part of the work of the first successful session of William's Irish Parliament: some wise in themselves; some wise or unwise, according as they were or were not put in force; all natural, however, and, as times went, inevitable, if the Irish Catholics were not to gather courage from the fears of the Government, and venture another rebellion.

One matter only of consequence the House of

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<sup>1</sup> 7 William III. cap. 21. *Irish Statutes.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Commons attempted, which threatened a renewal of the former quarrel. They could not forgive Porter, whom they accused of having been Lord Sydney's chief adviser. The impeachment in England had failed; it was renewed in Ireland, and the Chancellor was accused, by Colonel Ponsonby, of having abused his position to thrust Catholics into the commission of the peace, and to favour them in their suits with Protestants. Porter, after all, had been but the King's instrument. Unusually irritated, William reproached Capel for not having prevented an attack which he interpreted as directed against himself.<sup>1</sup> Capel excused himself by saying, that the first vote against the Chancellor had been taken before he had heard that the prosecution was intended. He was, perhaps, wise in abstaining from interference. Porter defended himself in person. The House of Commons decided, by a large majority, that his answers were sufficient; and further difficulty about him was removed by his death in the following year.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Capel to Secretary Vernon, November 23, 1695.' *MSS.*  
Record Office.

## SECTION III.

AMONG the Scotch and English settlers in Ireland none had deserved better than the Nonconformists. None had been worse rewarded. When the High Church party went with Ormond and the Kilkenny Council, at the close of the rebellion of 1641, a Puritan army recovered the country to England. The Restoration, which brought back the bishops, brought back the persecutions. The Presbyterian clergy had been suspended or imprisoned. Half the Cromwellian settlers had been driven from the country; and the children of the other half had been flung back, for want of ministers or schoolmasters, into open Popery.

The same story was repeated in 1689. The bishops and clergy of the Establishment prayed for James till William entered Dublin. The Ulster Calvinists had won immortal honour, and saved England half the labour of reconquest, by their share in the defence of Derry. In them there was a vigorous and living power in antagonism to Popery. In the existence in Ireland of free Protestant communities, beyond the episcopal Pale, lay its chief attraction to the Huguenot, the Palatine, and the English Puritan. The full and free equality of privilege which they had honourably earned, it was William's desire to secure to them by law. The tolerant spirit which made him reluctant

to interfere with the liberties of Catholics rendered him doubly anxious to protect the rights of subjects who had stood by him when others were found wanting, and whose opinions were virtually his own.

To foreign immigrants the desired liberty had been conceded. Dissenters, on the other hand, of Irish, Scotch, or English birth, were still under the Act of Uniformity, and their position was peculiar. In England the Toleration Act had given them their chapels, but they were excluded by the sacramental test from public employment. In Ireland there was no sacramental test. The Oath of Supremacy had answered the purpose as long as it was maintained; but to the substituted oaths of allegiance and abjuration their objections did not apply. They had become eligible for the magistracy, or for commissions in the army. They could sit in Parliament, or be members of corporations. They were in possession of all their secular rights as citizens; yet, notwithstanding, the exercise of any form of worship, except that of the Established Church, was prohibited under severe penalties.

The King, while personally in Ireland, had shown his opinion of the state of the law, and his recognition of the Presbyterians' services, by assigning a grant to their ministers, out of the Belfast customs, of 1200*l.* a year—the original of the fund known afterwards as the *Regium Donum*. The Church authorities refused to hold themselves bound by the pleasure of a prince whom in their hearts many of them still looked on as a usurper. On the return of quiet, Lemuel

Matthews, the Archdeacon of Down, took on himself to imprison a Presbyterian minister at Hillsborough for having presumed to preach a sermon. The King had seen the necessity of placing the ministers beyond the reach of the petty Church officials; and, in 1692, Lord Sydney submitted to the Irish Council the heads of a toleration bill, identical with the English, with a view to its being laid immediately before Parliament.

To unite the Protestant interest in the presence of a common enemy, to avoid the repetition of the worst mistakes of the Restoration, and establish if not intercommunion yet political equality between parties who had fought and suffered for the same cause, was so obviously desirable, that it is hard to see how such a proposal could have been opposed by reasonable men.

It was not only opposed, but opposed with a bitterness of animosity which only the remembrance that the parties to it were ecclesiastics, or under ecclesiastical influence, enables us even faintly to understand. The Irish Established clergy, the Irish peers, and the great landowners were ardent High Churchmen, dreading nothing so much as to be confounded with the Cromwellians, to whom most of them owed their estates; and, though reconciled outwardly to the Revolution by the want of discrimination in James's Parliament, which had not distinguished between them and the Calvinists, yet they were loud as ever against principles of church government which tended, as they were pleased to say, to republicanism.

Though forming but a third of the nominal Protestants, and an eleventh of the entire population, the Church party chose to believe that Ireland was theirs; that it was for them to dictate the terms on which either Catholics or Dissenters should be permitted to abide among them. The bishops argued that, if they agreed to a toleration act, they must be protected by a sacramental test; Nonconformity must be laid under a ban of some kind; and, if liberty of worship was allowed, the army and navy, the learned professions, and the Civil Service, must be reserved to Churchmen.

From a passage in one of Sydney's letters, it would seem that he himself shared the prejudices of his order, and that while he submitted to carry out the King's instructions, he loved the Dissenters as little as the prelates loved them.<sup>1</sup> He received <sup>1695</sup> orders to go on with the bill whether the bishops liked it or not, and though it would have been thrown out by the Lords, it would have been laid before the Commons, and probably in the existing humour of that House, might then have been carried there but for the altercation which broke up the Parliament. Relieved of this danger, the bishops pursued their triumph. They regarded the *Regium Donum* as an intolerable affront. The payment was suspended, and Sir Cyril Wych and Mr. Duncombe, who were associated with

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<sup>1</sup> 'Londonderry on the death of the mayor has chosen another that was never at church in his life. It is the work of the Scotch faction. If the King thinks of sending Scotch regiments here, advise him not.'—'Sydney to Nottingham, February 20, 1693.' *MSS.* Record Office



Capel on his first arrival as Lords Justices, advised, at the bishops' instance, that the grant should be discontinued. The King declined to yield to such intemperate bigotry, and, when the Second Parliament met, insisted once more on the introduction of the Toleration Act. The Dissenters belonged chiefly to the middle and lower ranks. They were farmers, shopkeepers, and merchants, and even in the Lower House were feebly represented. But the violent Protestant humour of the first session, which might have shown them favour, had cooled; and as it was understood that the bill would be met in Parliament by a second attempt to impose a test, they appealed to Irish opinion in a general remonstrance. They said truly that without toleration it was vain to expect that Protestant settlements in Ireland could thrive. The Test Act in England had been designed to exclude Catholics. If extended to Ireland, it would cut off one arm from the Protestant interest. They would prefer to remain as they were, they said, liable to prosecution under the Act of Uniformity, rather than be disabled from doing service to their country.

The bishops, or the Bishop of Dromore as their representative, replied that the Presbyterians were at heart rebels and Covenanters. If they had deserved well in the war, the Royal bounty was reward sufficient for them. To take the sacrament on admission to employment, the Bishop of Dromore called 'a trivial and inconsiderable mark of compliance with the State order;' and he added with pretty sarcasm,

‘that Episcopalians were opposed to toleration that they might preserve power to show their tenderness to their Dissenting brethren.’<sup>1</sup> The Toleration Bill was introduced into the Commons. Capel furthered it to the best of his power, but it was lost. The Earl of Drogheda tried to carry the heads of another bill to the same purpose in the Upper House; but the bishops mustered in strength and defeated him. Bishop King, writing bitterly to a friend in England, in complaint of Capel, who had promoted a Nonconformist to some post of consequence, said: ‘If we have such governors put upon us, ’twill be impossible, whatever reason or Scripture be against schismatics, to hinder them from multiplying. Most people value their interest above their religion. If Dissenters be picked out for places of honour, trust, and profit, many will daily qualify themselves as they see their neighbours do.’<sup>2</sup>

And in what condition was the Church which was thus determined to assert its sovereignty so peremptorily? Hacket, the Bishop of Down <sup>1694</sup> and Connor, who in Lord Clarendon’s time had been six years absent from his diocese, was residing still undisturbed at Hammersmith, and openly sold his preferments. Clarendon had ordered his return. He had paid no attention. In 1691 the Primate of Ireland applied to Archbishop Tillotson to appoint a coadjutor. The Archbishop discovered difficulties, but

<sup>1</sup> REID’S *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 456.

recommended that Hacket should be deprived 'for scandalous neglect of his charge.' Two more years passed. The diocese was reported as in hopeless disorder; and, in 1693, the Bishops of Meath, Derry, and Dromore went down as commissioners to examine and punish.

The first offender who fell under their notice was Archdeacon Matthews, the persecutor.

The character of this gentleman may be described by the commissioners: 'Dr. Matthews, as Archdeacon of Down, had four cures without any vicarages endowed, and five cures as Prebendary of Carncastle, in the diocese of Connor. On some of them he never had any resident curates; on others he had only nominal curates, to answer at visitations, but not perform other offices; on others curates altogether insufficient and unfit. Where he had curates he did not allow them sufficient maintenance. Catechizing, visiting the sick, administration of the sacraments, were so neglected that many left the Church and turned Presbyterians and Papists. To save charge of curates, he corrupted visitation-books, procured the Bishop to unite parishes in perpetuum, chose no churchwardens, usurped the Bishop's office in some parts of ordination. As Chancellor of the diocese of Down his misbehaviour had been equally great.'<sup>1</sup>

Matthews was deprived of his archdeacoury and suspended from his other offices. He scraped together

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<sup>1</sup> 'Report of Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 1694.' *MSS. Ireland*, Record Office.

what money he could lay hands on and rushed to London to appeal; the Lords Justices thinking it necessary to write to the Archbishop of Canterbury to desire that no favour might be shown to him.<sup>1</sup>

Hacket's case followed. The Bishop was convicted of non-residence and of flagrant simony. He had delegated his authority to women. He had admitted Papists to church livings, giving them false certificates of subscription. He was past improvement. The commissioners deposed him, and declared the see vacant.<sup>2</sup> Ward, Dean of Connor, was deprived for adultery and incontinence. Mylne, a prebendary of Kiltrush, was reprimanded for habitual drunkenness, and suspended for neglect of his duties.

Down and Connor, it may be said, was an exceptional diocese. Scandals had crept in through the Bishop's absence, and when discovered were vigorously reformed. But such exceptions should have ceased to be possible before the prelates of the Church took on themselves to punish others for doing work which their own officials could leave undone; work, it may be said, which it was impossible in the nature of things that they could ever discharge effectually. The presentations to the great majority of benefices was in the hands of the Government. Irish government patronage, spiritual and secular, ran generally in political grooves, and was disposed of to purchase votes in Parliament. A corrupt secretary, if he chose

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Lords Justices to the Archbishop of Canterbury.' *MSS. Ireland*, Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

to use his opportunity and distribute Church preferment to his own advantage, was never at a loss  
 1702 for a clergyman who was eager to make a simoniacal bargain with him.<sup>1</sup>

Every parish, according to law, was to have a local school supported by the incumbent. A single instance will show how vainly even the best bishops struggled against abuses which turned the act, as a scheme of national education, into an insult to the Irish people.

Among the waste lands thrown in as makeweights among his other bargains by the Court of Claims in 1652, Sir William Petty had secured the larger portion of the mountains of Kerry. At that time they were covered with forest, and Petty, who had a true genius for turning opportunities to account, had established furnaces at Kilmakilloge on the Kenmare river, at Kenmare itself, and at other spots in the neighbourhood to which ore was brought from England to be smelted. Small knots of Protestants had thus been collected and dispersed over a district where their presence, had they remained there, would afterwards have been of incalculable service. They had cod and ling fisheries, seal fisheries, and a rising trade. The Kenmare colony had been strong enough and spirited

<sup>1</sup> Secretary Southwell, writing on the 23rd July, 1703, to Lord Nottingham, says:

'The clergy here seem mighty dependent and very great courtiers, for the livings are pretty good and there is a constant expectation of preferment and a very great greediness to obtain. Nay, they hardly scruple offering what they hope will be the most prevailing argument. I am sorry to say it. I tell it only that your Lordship may know something of their humours.'—*MSS. Ireland, Record Office.*

ness to obtain. Nay, they hardly scruple offering what they hope will be the most prevailing argument. I am sorry to say it. I tell it only that your Lordship may know something of their humours.'—*MSS. Ireland, Record Office.*

enough to sustain a four months' siege in the last rebellion. The first care of a prudent Government would have been to see that these people were not left uncared for to sink away in the Catholic morass. Petty himself cared little for religion in its spiritual aspect; but he was aware of the money value of Protestant tenants and of the terms on which they could be preserved. On the Restoration two clergymen were sent into the district, one to Kenmare and Kilmakilloge, another to Templemore and Kilcroghan. The two parishes lay along the opposite shores of the Kenmare river for twenty miles, and the smelting colonies were thus moderately provided for. The rector of Kenmare died in 1673. A Mr. Palmer was appointed to succeed him. The rector of Templemore dying in 1676, a faculty was granted to Mr. Palmer to hold all the benefices collectively, and thus a single clergyman had charge of two groups of parishes divided by an arm of the sea. The water, however, formed a convenient highway at a time when there were no roads. With the help of curates the scattered flocks still received their due attendance, and in 1689, the furnaces were in full work and the colonies prospering. Mr. Palmer lived till 1701, and the downward progress marks the ebb of the vitality of Irish Protestantism. Tralee is forty miles from Kenmare, the Killarney mountains lying between them; and Kilmakilloge is nearly twenty miles beyond Kenmare. On Palmer's death, Dr. Richards, Dean of Tralee, already overburdened with Church preferments, set his mind upon annexing, in

addition, these remote and outlying benefices. He made influence with the Castle, obtained the presentation, and an order with it to the Bishop of Limerick to institute him. With this introduction the following letters from the Bishop of Limerick to Joshua Dawson, the Castle secretary, will tell their own story.

*'The Bishop of Limerick to Joshua Dawson, Esq., Secretary's Office, Dublin.*

*'October 9, 1702.*

'Sir,—This day I received yours of the 6th instant, wherein you mention a former letter which I never received. Dean Richards has imposed on the Lords Justices by telling them that the livings of Mr. Palmer, lately deceased, are contiguous to his deanery. I believe they are at least twelve miles<sup>1</sup> distant from the nearest part of the Dean's livings; and there is, moreover, a great mountain between them several miles over. They are of very great extent, and there is a considerable number of Protestants in them. Dean Richards writes to me to befriend him in his application for these livings; but I sent him word that I did by no means think it proper that he, who had so considerable a cure as that of Tralee to serve, should likewise have so many and large parishes at such a distance from him to serve besides. He offered to allow a curate what I should think fit, but I would not hearken to it. Mr. Palmer's livings will be a handsome competency for some deserving resident

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<sup>1</sup> Twelve Irish miles equal eighteen English.

incumbent, who shall make it his whole business to serve those cures without any other plurality. The Dean has, besides the parish of Tralee, eight or nine more parishes to take care of, being the corpus of his deanery, and his turn every fifth Sunday in the cathedral of Ardfert to preach besides.'

The Irish House of Commons passed a resolution in 1697, that the non-residence of the clergy with cure of souls in many parts of the kingdom was a great occasion of the growth and increase of Popery.<sup>1</sup> Remonstrances of bishops and resolutions in Parliament weighed little, it seems, against the carelessness or corruption with which the Castle government trifled away the interests of Protestantism. The scattered sheep on the Kenmare river were of less importance than some vote which it was desirable to secure. The Lords Justices sent the Bishop word that Dean Richards must be instituted notwithstanding, and the Bishop could but leave on record his ineffectual protest.

*'The Bishop of Limerick to Joshua Dawson, Esq.*

*'January 12, 1703.*

'Sir,—I received yours of the 5th instant this morning, acquainting me with their Excellencies' design of recommending Dean Richards for Mr. Palmer's livings, to which I can only answer that since I have used my endeavours to prevent what has been

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, December 1, 1697.



at all times so much condemned, I mean exorbitant plurality of cures, for by the addition of these livings the Dean will have at least fourteen parishes—I am the less concerned—only give me leave to make one observation, that, whereas you say his keeping an able curate will in effect answer the end as well as if those livings had been given to a resident incumbent, we find by experience the quite contrary; and if it were so, pluralities and non-residences would not be so much cried out against as they are. However, I submit to their Excellencies' wisdom, and am very thankful to them for their condescension in expressing their readiness in obliging me on some other occasion.'<sup>1</sup>

The Irish Church Establishment has been reproached for its missionary failures. What chance had an institution so conditioned? With what spirit could the better kind of clergy go about their work, with the poison breath of the Castle thus blighting their endeavours? The Dean of Tralee had his promotion, and the last English service had been heard in the church of Kilmakilloge. The church itself still lies a roofless ruin littered with skulls. The smelting colony melted away, till the few families that were left were carried off by French privateers, and the harbour and the bay became the recruiting depôt for the Pretender, and a nest of pirates and smugglers.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Correspondence of Secretary Dawson, 1702-3.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

## SECTION IV.

THE Parliament had commenced a policy of repression against the Catholic religion which could be justified only by a united and determined effort <sup>1697</sup> for the regeneration of the kingdom. The steps taken in this direction were so far singularly unpromising. The King was giving away among favourites the lands which should have been settled with Protestants. The Church was oppressing the Presbyterians, the Government was corrupting the Church. The High Churchmen, Peers, Bishops, and Commoners are now to be seen fostering secretly the common enemy in their terror of Whigs and Dissenters.

In both kingdoms the history of these years is woven of insincerity. Irish faction was played off by the English Jacobites as a means of embarrassing the King; and the passions which bred the Assassination Plot, and were blown into fury by its failure, are to be traced working below the surface amidst the intrigues of Dublin politicians. The Irish Parliament reassembled in the summer of 1697. Capel, who had been a sound friend to the true Protestant interest, unhappily died in 1696. Porter succeeded to the government as Lord Justice, but died also in the same winter. Party feeling ran so high that neither the sword nor

the great seal could be trusted in Irish hands ; and De Ruvigny, Earl of Galway, with Paulet, Marquis of Winchester, were sent to the Castle. Methuen, an English barrister, who had been minister in Portugal, took Porter's place as Chancellor.

The King had made up his mind to gratify what he supposed to be the wishes of his Protestant Irish subjects. They had clamoured against the leniency shown to Catholic offenders. He sent over a bill in which he relinquished for the Crown the power of reversing Irish outlawries, and he allowed a clause to be inserted, in the belief that it would be especially grateful, by which the estates of persons who had either been killed in rebellion, or had died in foreign service, were included in the forfeiture. As a yet greater sacrifice he had brought himself to consent, as a price for the confirmation of the Articles of Limerick, that the disputed clause should be withdrawn. When

the session of 1697 opened, the Lords Justices  
July 27,  
1697

were astonished to find that the position of Crown and Parliament was precisely reversed, that while five years before Protestant Ireland was in mutiny on account of the favour shown by the Crown to the Catholics, the House of Lords almost unanimously and a powerful party in the Commons were now inclining to protect the Catholics against the Crown. Mr. Stanley, Lord Galway's English secretary, in despair at the element in which he found himself, declared ' that he had fallen into the most eating, drinking, wrangling, quarrelsome country he ever saw ; there was no keeping

the peace among them.’<sup>1</sup> An Englishman accustomed to consistency had sufficient reason for finding himself bewildered.

In the Upper House the opposition was Episcopal and Jacobite. ‘There is a greater inclination at present,’ reported Lord Galway, ‘to favour the Papists here than in England. The bishops are great sticklers. The Bishops of Killaloe,<sup>2</sup> Killala,<sup>3</sup> and Derry<sup>4</sup> are the leading men that govern the rest.’<sup>5</sup> In the Commons, though the Anti-Catholic feeling was vigorous, disgust and indignation at the abuses in the distribution of forfeitures made them look with suspicion on a proposal which would leave more lands for the Government to trifle away. Ireland had not been torn to pieces that fortunes might be made for Countesses of Orkney, and they determined to see their way more clearly before they committed themselves.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Mr. Stanley to Dr. Smith, November 20, 1697.’ Smith was Dean of St. Patrick’s, but preferred to reside in England. Stanley’s letters to him throw additional light on the manner in which Church matters were managed in Ireland.

‘Though you used to forget me,’ he wrote, ‘for a year together in the same town, I have been so careful of your commands at this distance, that I have got those of your favourites made chaplains to my Lord Lieutenant as you desired, Dr. Raymond, Mr. Forbes, and Mr. Wade. I could not succeed in getting in the whole forty you named because his Grace has

not in all above a dozen, being unwilling to entertain more than he has a prospect of providing for. . . . I can’t but think you in the right to hold your deanery of St. Patrick’s in London; I should be glad to hold my secretary’s office there too. I hear you have been scribbling. Send me your works as they come out, or you shall be summoned to attend your deanery.’

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Lindsay.

<sup>3</sup> Wm. Lloyd.

<sup>4</sup> King, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin.

<sup>5</sup> ‘The Lords Justices to Secretary Vernon, August 31.’ *MSS.* Record Office.

When the Outlawries Bill was introduced in the Lower House, exception was taken that the interests of Protestants had not been provided for, who had purchased estates which fell under the Act from their supposed owners, or had advanced money in mortgage on them, or were otherwise interested. The omission had been made, perhaps, intentionally by Jacobite influence in England, to ensure the rejection of the bill. The House passed it, but themselves sketched the heads of a supplemental bill to meet the difficulty, which was forwarded to London for approval. On similar grounds they threw out altogether, on the second reading, an act barring remainders in tail to Catholics. The puzzled Lords Justices began to think that the King's concessions to Irish Protestant prejudice had been unnecessary after all. 'We find,' they wrote, 'the interest in favour of Papists so much greater than we expected, that perhaps the bill confirming the Articles of Limerick may not meet with the difficulties we at first apprehended, if the additional article be inserted.'<sup>1</sup> When the Outlawries Bill came before the Peers the opposition was avowed and unambiguous. Living men, who refused allegiance to the reigning sovereign, might equitably be treated as disloyal; but the bishops, by whom the Lords were wholly controlled, protested against punishing by attainders the families of men who had been killed in the service (as they believed) of their rightful sovereign. They

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<sup>1</sup> 'Winchester and Galway to the Duke of Shrewsbury, August 26, 1697.' *MSS.* Record Office.

insisted on saving the estates of noblemen whose present loyalty they declared above suspicion ; and so determined were they, that the Irish Council found it necessary to withdraw their measure and send the heads of another less sweeping, scarcely concealing their fears that, in the present temper of the Upper House, the second would share the fate of the first.<sup>1</sup>

The bill for the confirmation of the Articles of Limerick was introduced next. Taught, perhaps, by the Assassination Plot, William himself no longer desired to maintain the clause over which there had been such angry contention. The omission of it, the Lords Justices said, 'would be very pleasing to the majority of good people ;' but they were unable, after

<sup>1</sup> 'In the House of Peers the opposition has been much stronger from most of the bishops and some of the temporal lords, whose objection has chiefly been the subjecting such persons to the forfeiture of their estates who shall at any time hereafter be found by inquisition to have died in rebellion. And they have likewise insisted on particular provisoes in behalf of some lords that are now Protestants who apprehend themselves affected by that bill. We therefore . . . have resolved that a new one shall be prepared, wherein there may remain no ground for the objections that have been made to this . . . We shall take care that the intended bill be transmitted as soon as may be ; and we hope it will be sent

back with all convenient expedition, at which time it will be more evident whether the opposition that has been made was only in behalf of the Protestants, for we cannot yet be positive.

'The several oppositions which the bill has found here have been no small encouragement to the Papists of this kingdom. They do not scruple to boast and promise themselves the miscarriage of the second bill when it shall be transmitted to England. All, or most of them, design to make application for particular provisoes, which it is our earnest request that their Excellencies will be pleased to refuse.' — 'Winchester and Galway to the Duke of Shrewsbury, August 26, 1697.' MSS. Record Office.

their experience with the Outlawry Bill, to foretell how it would be received in Parliament. There were many members of the Lower House who denied that the Catholics were entitled to articles of any kind. There were others who desired to postpone the confirmation, altogether till the additional clause could be carried. An opposition combined out of these two parties might, perhaps, be too strong to encounter. Moderation and good sense carried the day. It would have been far better had Limerick been made to capitulate unconditionally; but the conditions which were really promised it would have been unwise and dishonourable to disallow. The Commons passed the Articles deprived of the features which had been surreptitiously introduced into them; but the omission, which secured the passing of the bill in one house, was all but fatal to it in the other.

The High-Flying Bishops were again in the front of the battle. Jacobites at heart, they looked on the Catholics as their natural friends. After a violent debate the peers sent a message to Lord Galway desiring to be informed on what grounds the clause had been left out after being ratified by the King himself. Lord Galway declined to answer. He said that the request was without precedent, and could not be complied with. 'The Lords Justices of England had detained the bill before them,' he said, 'until they had laid before the King all the difficulties which concerned the same; and, after having received his majesty's pleasure, had commanded them to present it to the

Parliament with a desire that it might be passed in the present form.’<sup>1</sup>

The third reading was carried, but only by a majority of a single vote. Seven bishops and seven lay lords recorded a protest, which was entered on the journals of the House. These fourteen noblemen insisted that the articles were not fully confirmed. ‘The Act as it passed, left the Catholics in worse condition than they were in before;’<sup>2</sup> the additional clause was most material, and several persons who had been adjudged within the Articles would now be excluded from the benefit of them.’<sup>3</sup>

‘The bishops,’ wrote the Lords Justices, ‘have been extremely mischievous.’<sup>4</sup>

The Outlawries Bill, newly drawn, arrived soon after from England. It contained special provisoes for such peers and gentlemen as the Upper House desired particularly to favour. The Earls of Tyrone and Kerry, Lord Kingston,<sup>5</sup> Lords Lowth, Carlingford, Athenry, and Bellew, Lord Wilson, Patrick Sarsfield,

<sup>1</sup> ‘Winchester and Galway to the Duke of Shrewsbury, September 22, 1697.’

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See *Lords’ Journals*, Ireland. September, 1697. The vague wording of the Second Article of Limerick rendered necessary several other definitions, of which the Catholics complained. The preamble admits that ‘so much’ only of the Articles were confirmed ‘as might consist with the safety and welfare of his majesty’s subjects in

Ireland.’—9 William III. cap. 2. Hence much denunciation of broken faith, &c. The fight, however, it is evident from the Lords Justices’ letter, was entirely over the disputed clause. The remaining alterations aimed merely at precision of statement.

<sup>4</sup> ‘The Lords Justices to the Duke of Shrewsbury, September 23.’ *MSS.* Record Office. Ireland.

<sup>5</sup> These three were among the seven who protested against the Confirmation Bill.



and many others, were exempted by name from its operation. The High Churchmen were obliged to be contented with securing their personal friends; and these exceptions being allowed, the bill was permitted to pass. Tyrconnell, Sir Richard Nagle, and the rest of the leading Jacobites were described in the preamble as having levied war against the King; brought the French, his majesty's enemies, into the realm; murdered and destroyed several thousands of his majesty's good Protestant subjects, for no other reason but for their being of the Protestant religion; and as having encouraged an unnatural rebellion throughout Ireland. All outlawries and attainders on account of the late war, not already reversed, or affecting persons comprehended within the Articles of Limerick, or persons exempted by name in the statute, were declared to stand good for ever, any pardon from the King or his heirs notwithstanding. Papists who had died in rebellion before the peace fared no better; they were adjudged traitors, *ipso facto*, and their estates passed from their families.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the Outlawries Bill two other measures of consequence were carried in the Protestant interest, each of which attempts had been made, with partial success, to defeat in England. By the first Article of Limerick it had been promised that the Catholics should enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as were consistent with the law, or as they

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<sup>1</sup> 9 William III. cap. 25. *Irish Statutes.*

had enjoyed in the time of Charles the Second. By the Act of Uniformity the exercise of their religion was forbidden ; but, under Charles the Second, it had been practically connived at. To make the Limerick concessions into a reality it was determined, that the secular priests might remain uninterfered with, saying mass, hearing confession, and performing the other rites of their Church ; while the archbishops and bishops, all officials exercising jurisdiction, and the regular clergy, the members of religious houses or societies, should depart and trouble Ireland no more. A bill for this purpose was drawn by the Irish Council and sent to England for approval. The English ministers, hoping to secure a larger measure of toleration, endeavoured to defeat it by inserting a clause which they trusted would secure its rejection, and had so worded the provision for the suppression of convents and monasteries, as to cover every guild and corporation in the country.<sup>1</sup> The Irish Parliament were too determined on their object to be thus put off. They redrew their bill, sent it again to England, from which this time it was returned unaltered ; and a law was passed that, inasmuch as the late rebellion had been notoriously promoted by the Catholic clergy, and the public safety was endangered by the presence of so

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<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered that the Irish Parliament had no power to alter bills that came over from England. They could only accept or reject. On the discovery of a mistake fresh reference had to be made to the English council ; and, if a bill came on at the end of a session, the delay in the transmission backwards and forwards was often equivalent to its entire defeat.

many of them, the members of the Catholic hierarchy, and the entire staff of Jesuits and friars, must take themselves away before the following May; if they returned, or were found in Ireland after that time, they should be held guilty of high treason.<sup>1</sup> The virus of Romanism lay in the religious orders, and in the presence of prelates able to continue the succession. Deprived of these elements it might be left to linger and die at last a natural death.

A second act in the same direction, the first of a long series on the same subject, attempted to provide against intermarriages between Catholics and Protestants.<sup>2</sup> Protestant heiresses had given themselves and their estates to Papists. Protestant gentlemen who married Popish wives, if not converted themselves, had allowed their children to be educated in their mother's faith. The Parliament considered that Almighty God was thus dishonoured, and the Protestant interest prejudiced. Thenceforward a Protestant woman having real property, and married to a Papist, was pronounced dead in law, and her estate was made to devolve on the Protestant next of kin. A Protestant man marrying without a certificate from a bishop or magistrate

<sup>1</sup> 9 William III. cap. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Difficulties were raised ineffectually against this bill also in England. The draft of it was first sent over from Ireland in July. On the 12th the Lords Justices write to the Duke of Shrewsbury:

'Mr. Vernon having acquainted us that in the bill for preventing

the intermarriages of Protestants with Papists now lying before the Council in England some things are found exceptionable . . . we do upon enquiry find that bill as it is drawn to be judged very reasonable, and to be much desired by the Protestants of this kingdom.'

—*MSS.* Dublin Castle.

(and such a certificate was only to be given in case of his marriage with a person of his own faith) was held to have become in law himself a Papist, to lie under all the disabilities of his creed, to be unable to sit in Parliament, or hold any office, military or civil.<sup>1</sup>

Both these measures were unwillingly conceded by William, who, had he been able, would have carried out in Ireland the principles of religious equality which had been adopted into the constitution of the United Provinces. Unfortunately for a good understanding between the two countries, where England was tolerant Ireland was severe. Where England was most jealous and susceptible, Ireland, impregnated with Jacobitism, was suspiciously lenient. The discovery of the Catholic plot for the murder of the King in 1695 had awakened in all classes of Protestant Englishmen a profound indignation. The Parliament, following the precedent of 1584, had passed a bill which, in the event of any such conspiracy succeeding, would defeat the object of it; and an association, originating in the House of Commons, had been signed almost universally throughout England and Scotland, those who enrolled their names binding themselves to stand by one another in defence of the King and English liberty 'against the late King James and his adherents.'

It was thought good to give Ireland the same opportunity of displaying its loyalty.

A bill came over, identical, probably, with the act

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<sup>1</sup> 9 William III. cap. 3.

passed in England<sup>1</sup> 'for the security of his majesty's person,' with a copy of the Association Bond, which the Irish Parliament was invited to ratify. Coincidentally with the introduction of the bill, there was laid on the table of the House of Commons a letter, in the handwriting of an officer in James's army, found among Bishop Tyrrell's papers, described as containing 'a project for the extirpation of all the Protestants in Ireland.'<sup>2</sup> The Commons, making no difficulty so far, passed a series of resolutions, to which they invited the Lords to agree. 'The Papists,' they said, 'ever since the Reformation, had endeavoured to subvert the Protestant religion by conspiracies, massacres, and rebellions. They retained the same purpose, and designed, if possible, to separate Ireland from the Imperial Crown. Other laws, more stringent, were therefore absolutely required to assure the reformed religion and the connexion of the two realms. The Catholics must be excluded from voting at elections for members of Parliament; the oaths, which were the condition of holding office under the Crown, must be exacted more regularly; and a law must be made, that it should be high treason to deny King William to be lawful sovereign.'<sup>3</sup>

The resolutions passed by acclamation. The bill sent from England and the Association Bond were

<sup>1</sup> 7 & 8 William III. cap. 27. Office. Cf. *Commons' Journals*, November 29.  
*English Statutes.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Resolutions of the House of Commons, November 19, 1697.' *Commons' Journals*, Nov. 29, 1697.  
French. *MSS. Ireland. Record*

passed also by a large majority, although dissentient voices were found to urge that it was unfair, in a country like Ireland, to exact generally an abjuration of the Papal power.<sup>1</sup>

In the House of Lords the general allegations of the evil intentions of the Catholics were not denied. It was admitted that, if they could, they would overthrow Protestantism, and that stricter laws were needed. Individually they subscribed the Association Bond. But a stand was made on the clause, which had been opposed unsuccessfully in the Commons. A motion was made in committee to strike it out; and finally, on a division, a bill, the rejection of which, under the peculiar circumstances, could not but be construed into an avowal of disloyalty, was altogether lost.<sup>2</sup>

To this unlucky vote is to be attributed the consent of England to the measures which immediately followed for the destruction of the Irish woollen manufactures. Ireland, it seemed, was determinately disloyal. Even the Protestant Peers were determined to throw a shield over the inveterate Jacobitism of the High Churchmen. The only resource, therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> 'There were many who spoke against the clause that requires all persons, under penalty of a pre-munire, to renounce the superiority of any foreign power in ecclesiastical or spiritual matters within the realm when required by the justices at their Quarter Sessions, and for that reason opposed the bill; but

it passed by a majority of twenty-four, and has been carried to the House of Lords.'—'The Lords Justices to the Duke of Shrewsbury, November 24, 1697.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lords Justices to the Duke of Shrewsbury, November 29.' *Ibid.*

was to keep her weak and miserable. The deepest resentment was conceived, and was loudly expressed. A letter was addressed to a member of the English House of Commons, making no distinction of creed or race, involving the Irish altogether in a common censure, and expressing a hope that 'the House would make them remember that they were conquered.'<sup>1</sup>

Another chance was allowed to the Irish Parliament to redeem their mistake. Unhappily they added to their offences. The Irish Council were directed to prepare a similar bill for the session of the next year. To soften the objections, some members proposed to exempt such Catholics from the oath as were included under the Articles of Limerick; and, when the heads were sent for revision to England, a clause was added to that effect. The Lords Justices admitted that if the reasons alleged were of weight, they applied not to the Article men only, but to every Catholic in Ireland: if any Catholic could conscientiously take the Abjuration Oath all might be required to take it; if not, 'it seemed reasonable,' the Lords Justices pleaded, 'that it should not be demanded of any.' They left the decision to England, intimating however at the same time their own belief, that the oath<sup>2</sup> might be

<sup>1</sup> 'Answer to a Letter from a Gentleman in the Country to a Member of the House of Commons relating to the trade of Ireland.' London, 1698.

<sup>2</sup> 'I, A. B., do swear that I do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure as impious and heretical

that damnable doctrine and position that princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or by any other whatsoever; and I do declare that no foreign prince, person, prelate,

taken by every one who was resolved to be a faithful subject.<sup>1</sup>

The English Government was in no humour to consider the tenderness of Irish consciences. The Council struck off the proposed exceptions. They returned the bill in the form in which the Peers had rejected it—to be thrown out again, and this time by the House of Commons. Petitioners were heard in objection at the bar. ‘After some hours’ debate it was carried by a majority of ten, that the clause enjoining the oath and expressing the penalties should not be admitted.’ The eager resolutions went for nothing, where words and deeds so ill corresponded; and, in the eyes of all loyal Protestant Englishmen, the unfortunate country had made a public declaration of Jacobitism.<sup>2</sup>

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state, or potentate, hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm.’

By the English act any person might be required by a magistrate

to take this oath, and, on refusing, was reduced to the condition of a Popish recusant.

<sup>1</sup> ‘The Lords Justices to the Duke of Shrewsbury, August 1698.’ *MSS.* Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* October 15, 1698. *Ibid.*



## SECTION V.

THE reconquest of Ireland had cost the English taxpayer nine millions sterling. The lands, out of  
 1698 which he had hoped, in part, at least, to be repaid, had been made away with by a corrupt commission under specious pretences of rewards for invisible services, or, if rescued from their hands by the intervention of the Irish Parliament, rescued only to be restored to disloyal noblemen, who would use these recovered opportunities to cause fresh trouble. The last vote,<sup>1</sup> the deliberate refusal of both Lords and Commons to allow a test of allegiance there, which would have sifted the treacherous from the faithful, destroyed the last hope of dependence on the wretched, uncertain, discontented, wavering island; and the murmurs of the English clothiers, who had watched her extending woollen manufactures with cowardly jealousy, found willing and eager listeners. This Ireland, with her harbours and rivers, her unnumbered sheep flocks, fattened on her limestone pastures, producing the finest fleeces in the world, this nest of Popery and sedition, this bottomless morass of expense and confusion, was to lift up its head and prosper, tempt away their capital and their workmen, rob

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<sup>1</sup> The vote of the Peers in 1697 | in 1698, it is possible, though not  
 decided the commercial fate of Ire- | certain, that the disabilities might  
 land. Had the bill been passed | have been taken off.

England of the secret of her wealth, her monopoly in the world's markets of the broad cloth, frieze, and flannel trade. Had these purblind commercial politicians known what belonged to their peace they would have welcomed the development of Irish industry as a better guarantee against future trouble than a hundred Acts of Parliament. No spirit could have more effectually killed the genius of Popery and Jacobitism, or could more surely have provided that Ireland should never again be a burden on the English exchequer, than the growth of trade and manufacture there. The practical intelligence, the fixed and orderly habits, the class of persons who would have been attracted over to make their homes where land was cheap, and waited only for labour and capital to be as rich and fair as their own English counties, these things would have formed the links of an invisible chain, which could never have been broken, to bind the two islands into one. Traders' eyes unhappily can never look beyond the next year's balance sheet. They saw their artisans emigrating. They saw, or thought they saw, the produce of the Irish looms competing with theirs in the home market, in the colonies, and on the continent. They imagined their business stolen from them, their towns depopulated, the value of their lands decreased, their country itself plunged at last into ruin, all for the sake of that miserable spot which had been a thorn in England's side for centuries.

No language could sufficiently express the emotions of the exasperated English capitalist. The

Parliament was called upon to 'make the Irish remember that they were conquered.' They should not be allowed to build or keep at sea a single ship. They should not manufacture a thing except their linen, and their commerce should be so tied and bound, that they should interfere with England nowhere. To block them from the water altogether, even their fishery 'must be with men and boats from England.' Their legislature, of which they made so ill a use, must be ended, and they must be governed by the Parliament of England. So argued English 'common sense.'<sup>1</sup> In vain an Irish apologist replied, that to imagine Ireland's competition could injure England was a dream. The Irish 'seldom sailed further than a potatoe garden,' and traded but in cows. They 'knew as little of trade and navigation as the American Indian.' They had not five seamen of their nation, and not one ship of their own at Dublin. Such little trade as they had was carried on by English merchants and on English account.<sup>2</sup> Good sense and truth could find no hearing amidst the general clamour. It was not enough that the Navigation Act had destroyed the Irish shipping interest. The export of Irish fleeces to any country but England had been already prohibited; but the restrictions on the sale of the raw material was a temptation to the Irish to work it up at home, and as long as they might export their blankets and their friezes,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Answer to a Letter from a Gentleman in the Country to a Member of the House of Commons, relating to the Trade of Ireland. London, 1698.'

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

England's trade was in danger from their competition. The English manufacturers considered it politic and fair to say to them, 'You shall not weave your wool at home at all; you shall not sell your woollen cloth either here or abroad; we will put you under such disadvantages that it shall not be worth your while to supply your own necessities; you shall buy our cloths and frieze to clothe your own backs; you shall sell your fleeces only to us; and, as it is our interest to have it on easy terms, you shall take the prices which we are pleased to offer.'<sup>1</sup> In this spirit the English cloth manufacturers addressed themselves to their own Parliament; and Parliament, blinded by ill-humour and prejudice, endorsed their petition, and carried it to the King in language in which the baseness of the motive was disguised faintly under pretence of national interest.

The Peers represented 'that the growing manufacture of cloth in Ireland, by cheapness of the necessaries of life, and goodness of materials, invited Englishmen

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<sup>1</sup> Hely Hutchinson, in a memorial to the Government in 1779, thus briefly sums up the position: 'We can sell our woollen goods only to Great Britain. We can buy woollen goods there only. If such a law related to two private men instead of two kingdoms, and enjoined that in buying and selling the same goods an individual should deal with one man only in exclusion of others, it would in effect ordain that both as buyer and seller that

man should fix his own price and profit, and would refer to his discretion the loss and profit of the other dealer; while, again, other English laws impose a duty on the importation of the manufacture into England equal to a prohibition, which amounts to this, "You shall not sell to us, and you shall buy only from us."—'Memorial of Mr. Hely Hutchinson to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, July 1, 1779.' MSS. Record Office, Ireland.

with their families and servants to settle there. The King's loyal subjects in England apprehended the further growth of it would prejudice the manufactures in England. The trade of England would decline, the value of land decrease, and the number of the people diminish. They besought his majesty to intimate to his Irish subjects that the growth of the woollen manufactures there had been and would be always looked upon with jealousy in England, and if not timely remedied, might occasion very strict laws totally to prohibit and suppress the same.'

The Commons said that the 'wealth and power of England depended on her preserving a monopoly of the woollen manufactures. They looked with jealousy on the increase of it elsewhere, and must use their utmost endeavours to prevent it from extending. The Irish were dependent on and protected by England in the enjoyment of all that they had, and the English Parliament would be obliged to interfere unless the King found means to make Ireland understand its position.'

Both Houses insisted that the Irish woollen trade should cease. The Irish linen manufacture, since there were for the present no rival English interests with which it competed, they were willing to leave untouched, and even to encourage. Though no pledge was given, there was an implied compact that the sacrifice of one branch of industry should be compensated by the protection of the other.

The King replied briefly that the wish of Parlia-

ment should be carried out, and Ireland was invited to apply the knife to her own throat. Two letters from William to the Lords Justices survive in Dublin Castle, embodying the words of the two addresses, and recommending to the attention of the Legislature there the worst and most fatal of all the mistaken legislative experiments, to which a dependent country was ever subjected by the folly of its superiors.<sup>1</sup>

The Irish Houses, in dread of abolition if they refused, relying on the promise of encouragement to their linen trade,<sup>2</sup> and otherwise unable to help themselves, acquiesced. They laid an export duty of four shillings in the pound on all broadcloths carried out of Ireland, and half as much on kerseys, flannels, and friezes, amounting in itself to a complete prohibition; while, to make assurance more sure, the English Parliament passed an act prohibiting the export out of Ireland of either wool or woollen manufactures to any country but England, to any port in England except six on St. George's Channel, and only from the six towns of Dublin, Waterford, Youghal, Kinsale, Cork, and Waterford.<sup>3</sup>

The belief that, with a coast line like that of Ireland, and with a population which they were punishing for disloyalty, such restrictions could really be enforced,

<sup>1</sup> *MSS.* 1698. Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> Macpherson, in the *History of Commerce*, says 'that the suppression of the woollen trade was agreed to by Ireland in return for no less than nine millions sterling expend-

ed by England in the reduction of Ireland at the Revolution.'

<sup>3</sup> 10 William III. cap. 10. *English Acts.* 10 William III. cap. 5. *Irish Acts.*

was one of those illusions which only the intellect of an English merchant could have entertained. The result of this restriction was to convert the Irish, beyond their other troublesome peculiarities, into a nation of smugglers.

How far England adhered to the linen compact will be told in its place. For the present, Mr. Hely Hutchinson's summary of the story will suffice.

'It is true you promised, in return for the restraints, to encourage our linen manufacture. But how have you done it? By giving large bounties for the making of coarse linen in the Highlands of Scotland—bounties on the exportation of English linen—opening the linen manufacture to all persons without serving apprenticeships, and imposing a tax of 30 per cent. on all foreign linens, which has been construed to extend to Irish printed, stained, dyed, striped, or chequered.'

'Will you,' Hutchinson asked, with prophetic indignation, 'will you have an increased population employed at home, where they will contribute to the wealth and strength of the State; or shall they emigrate to America, where it is possible they may assist in dismembering the British empire?'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Hely Hutchinson to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, July 1, 1779.' MSS. Record Office, Ireland.

## SECTION VI.

THE indignation in England at the rejection of the Security Act had been aggravated by the simultaneous appearance of a book dear to Irish patriotism, by William Molyneux, the member for Dublin, denying the obligation of Ireland to submit to statutes passed by the English Parliament, or to re-enact them unless agreeable to herself. The bitterness with which her commercial prosperity was immediately assailed arose from a belief that Ireland was assuming deliberately an attitude of defiance. The book was fiercely condemned. The House of Commons insisted, in a memorial to the King, that the laws which restrained the Irish Parliament must not be evaded<sup>1</sup>—that Ireland was, and should continue, a dependent country. It is likely they considered weakness and poverty the best securities that could be taken for her submission. Having thus however, with one hand, struck so hard a blow at her welfare, with the other they dragged her, or tried to drag her, out of the slough of intrigue into which she had been tumbled. The want of purpose at the Castle and the hopeless entanglement of religious and political passions, had left the field wide open to avarice and baseness. The lands available to repay the expenses of the war had melted unaccountably into nothing. Notorious Jacobite peers had recovered their property

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary History*, vol. v. p. 1181.



under the exceptions to the Outlawries Bill. The Court of Claims, undeterred by the exposures of 1693, had gone on with their work as quietly as if nothing had happened. Estates were granted away. Individuals who began with nothing were enormously rich, but the exchequer was empty as ever. Evidently there was no help in Ireland itself; and the House of Commons in England at last, in angry despair, appointed a committee to ravel out the mystery.

The Court of Claims, seeing their end approaching, made the most of the time remaining to them, admitting shoals of Catholics under the Articles of Limerick who had no business there.<sup>1</sup> Slowly, and with extreme difficulty, the seven commissioners traced out the scandalous history. So strongly was the corruption at work that their own body was tainted. When they had drawn up their report, four only of them signed it.<sup>2</sup> Sir Richard Levinge, one of the dissentients, himself a large sharer in the public plunder, and dreading that he might be made to disgorge it, sent in a conflicting statement; and, to damage his companions, charged them with disloyalty.<sup>3</sup> The accusation was looked into in England, and dismissed. Levinge was sent to the

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<sup>1</sup> 'One thing seems to us very extraordinary, that more persons were adjudged within the Articles since the commencement of our enquiry than had been since the making of the Articles.'—*Report of the Commissioners appointed by Parliament*. London, 1700.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Annesley, John Tren-

chard, James Hamilton, and Henry Langford.

<sup>3</sup> Trenchard had described the grant to Lady Orkney as 'scandalous.' Lady Orkney was the late Queen's favourite, and Levinge hoped he could set the King against the report by denouncing Trenchard.

Tower for defamation. The House of Commons voted that 'the four commissioners had conducted themselves with integrity, courage, and understanding;' and the disposition of the forfeitures they considered so disgraceful, that there was no remedy but to cancel every grant which had been made.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some of the most glaring instances of misappropriation were mentioned in detail. Among other curious features in the story it appeared, that as many of the persons who had applied for and obtained grants of property had purposely understated its value, so in turn they had been themselves cheated by their agents, who, by similar frauds, had tempted them to dispose of lands worth tens of thousands of pounds for as many hundreds.

Of Catholic proprietors who had been in the rebellion, and were covered by no articles, either of Limerick or Galway, many were never informed against; many were tried, but acquitted. The 'freeholders who formed the juries, by contracting new friendships with the Irish, or by intermarriage with them, *but chiefly* through a general dislike of the disposition of the forfeitures, were scarcely willing to find any person guilty, even upon full evidence.'

In Connaught 'the findings were almost what the forfeiting persons pleased.' Forty persons not covered by articles were tried at Galway. There were few Protestants free-holders, and the juries were formed of gentlemen who, most

of them, had been officers in James's army, and had been protected by the Galway Articles. All the forty were in consequence acquitted. Mr. Kirwan, who was one of them, had served in a regiment which had been commanded by the foreman of the jury. Even in Connaught there was a difficulty in giving a verdict in the face of evidence so conclusive, so one of the jurors absented himself.

The forfeitures, though in appearance considerable, had been so handled by the Court as to exhibit an actual deficiency, the cost of management being made to exceed the returns either of sale or rent—'a thing,' the commissioners remarked, 'that might appear extraordinary till it was observed that obscure men, who had little or no property before the rebellion, had become possessed of considerable and even very great estates.' The management had been made so intricate that the accounts were purposely unintelligible. The law officers of the Crown, the members of the Court, even the Lords Justices themselves, had feathered their nests out of the spoils. Lord Coningsby, though he escaped impeachment, had richly deserved it.

A vote passed on the 18th January, 1700, 'that the  
 1700 advising, procuring, and framing these grants  
 had occasioned great debts and heavy taxes,  
 and highly reflected on the King's honour, and that  
 the officers and instruments concerned in the same had  
 highly failed in the performance of their duty.'<sup>1</sup>

Leave was given to bring in a bill to resume the grants for the use of the public, and an address on the subject was presented by the entire House to the King.

Conscious of the integrity of his own motives, and irritated at the seeming reflection on his personal conduct, William replied briefly, that no private inclination, but the obligations of justice only, had led him to reward those who had served in the reduction of Ireland out of the forfeited estates there. The taxes and debts of which the Commons complained had been occasioned by the wars on the Continent, and England would best consult her honour by taking the burden on herself.

William was thinking of Sydney and De Ruvigny. The Commons, not forgetting them, but differently estimating their merits, were thinking also of the Countess of Orkney and the English taxpayers. 'Whoever had advised that answer,' they rejoined, in a temper like the Long Parliament's, 'had used his utmost endeavour to create a misunderstanding and jealousy between the King and his people.'

To William's deep mortification, a Resumption

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary History*, vol. v. p. 1214.

Bill was brought in and carried. Every grant of a forfeiture which had been made in the King's name was declared null. In most instances the lands had been resold, the high persons who had been the recipients of the King's bounty not dreaming of seeking a home for themselves in Ireland; but, as the original gift was invalid, the rights depending on it were invalid also. Allowance was made for improvements, and the claims of those who had laid out money on the lands which they believed to be their own were recognized: but the purchase-money the purchasers were left to recover from those to whom they had paid it; and a significant clause was added to the Act, 'that the procuring or passing exorbitant grants by any member of the Privy Council, or by any other that had been a Privy Councillor, to his own use or benefit, was a high crime and misdemeanour.'<sup>1</sup>

To secure the consent of the Upper House, the Resumption Bill was attached to the Money Bill; and the Money Bill was so framed that it must be passed unmutated, or else rejected. The Lords threatened amendments. The Commons locked their doors, and proceeded to comment more at length on the connexion of the King's bounties with the list of Privy Councillors. Amidst humiliation, rage, and pain, the bill passed, and received the Royal assent. The Irish forfeitures were recovered out of the harpies' talons, and made over to thirteen trustees, to be sold to the highest bidder.

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<sup>1</sup> 11 William III. cap. 2.

Another measure was carried also before the English Parliament separated, which, though immediately affecting England only, became to Ireland an example of the deepest moment, and formed an eventual turning-point in its history. The Catholic clergy, recovering from the first terrors into which they had been thrown by the revolution, still dreaming of changes, unable to part with a vision of a reconciled England, which they had imagined to be on the eve of realization, were again at their eternal work of plots and conspiracies, moving about in contempt of penal laws, and deep in Jacobitism and treason. Heated with their late success, and this time with William's sanction, the Protestant majorities in the two Houses passed the Act which formed the model of the Irish Act 'to prevent the future growth of Popery.'

By the 4th of the 11th of William the Third any bishop or priest of the Roman Church convicted of saying mass, teaching or keeping a school, or exercising any other religious function, was made liable to perpetual imprisonment. A hundred pounds reward was offered for the apprehension of such persons ; and, because experience had proved the insufficiency of laws against opinions or acts of worship, without touching more nearly the motives found powerful with the laity, it was enacted further that no person, educated in or professing the Popish religion, who had not, within six months after attaining the age of eighteen, taken the two oaths of allegiance and abjuration, and made the declaration disavowing Transub-

stantiation, should be capable of inheriting real estate in England. Nor should any Papist be allowed to purchase lands ; nor might he send his children to be educated in foreign seminaries. And if any Papist father, having Protestant children, should attempt to punish or coerce them, by a refusal of adequate maintenance, the Court of Chancery should have power to interfere and compel the parent to make such children a sufficient allowance.

The Act succeeded in England, and has, therefore, been little heard of. Catholicism ceased practically to exist among us, and has only revived within the memory of middle-aged men. Its companion Act failed in Ireland, and has, therefore, been held up as an example of the folly and ineffectuality of religious persecution. Experience, to which the appeal is made so confidently, gives opposite answers in the two countries ; and, if the question be argued on broad grounds of justice, the reply must still vary with the conditions of time and place and with the active principles of the creed proscribed. The imagination of ordinary men is unequal to the reproduction of circumstances other than those by which they are themselves surrounded ; and, when the political or moral mischiefs of particular opinions seem to have disappeared, they condemn measures as bigoted and tyrannical which, had their lot been cast in other times, they would have themselves been the loudest in applauding.

The condition of Ireland was not the condition of England. A measure suited for one may, on this

ground, have been unsuited to the other; but, if it be argued, that persecution is necessarily unsuccessful, the history of England and Scotland is an adequate answer.

The Catholics, at all events, had no right to complain. They, who had never professed toleration, could not demand it. To them the same measure only was meted out which they had allowed to others in England while the power was theirs, and which they continued to allow them in other countries, where the power was still theirs. They suffered under no disabilities in Great Britain which Protestants did not suffer under in France, and Spain, and Italy. So long as differences of religion affected the public policy of Catholic and Protestant governments, the English and Irish Catholic was the natural ally of the enemies of the English throne, and as such, in the opinion of the times, a legitimate object of restraint.

## SECTION VII.

POPULAR legislatures may pass laws in paroxysms of emotion, but, unless the emotion is continuous, and unless with the laws they provide an executive to give effect to their resolutions, the interposition may remain after all but a mute and helpless protest. Their sessions end, their indignation dies away, satisfied with what it seems to have achieved. Corruption resumes its sway, and, after a brief pause, the stream falls back into its old channels. The forfeited estates were recovered from the grantees, and, by the Act of Resumption, were to be sold to Protestants, and to Protestants only. The thirteen trustees were selected for their supposed unimpeachable probity; no one was admitted into their number who held office under the Crown, who was in any way accountable to the King, or who was in Parliament, and, therefore, liable to influence. They entered into possession of estates worth in fee simple nearly two millions; which were to be disposed of at last to the best advantage for the benefit of the nation. Yet either the situation was too difficult for them, or the temptation was too strong. They sate for two years. The rents were consumed by their expenses. The lands were re-distributed. Yet, when they were gone, the purchase-money was eaten up by the demand as it arose; and the Protestant claim was defeated or evaded. The trustees displayed, in all



their decrees, 'the same manifest partiality for Papists,' which had been so passionately condemned. The spirit which had thrown out the Security Act continued dominant, 'it being a maxim among all who favoured King James's interest, to serve the professors of that religion whose estates were confiscated for their adherence to him.'<sup>1</sup>

There was no further interference. An attempt to control the affairs of Ireland on principles of probity and uprightness, was abandoned as hopeless; but the estrangement between the two islands was aggravated, and the mutual resentment and suspicion; and, more than ever, it became the policy of England to keep her equivocal neighbour poor and helpless. Among the immediate results was an increasing development of absenteeism. In all empires the wealth and intellect of the provinces flow inevitably towards the ruling country, where social life is more agreeable, pleasures more refined, and the openings to ambition more inviting. The absenteeism of Ireland was peculiarly objectionable, for the justification of the forfeitures was the necessity of settling English and Scotch rulers on the soil. That land had become a chattel, to be bought and sold at pleasure, however, rendered the enforcement of residence impossible. The altered circumstances of society threw estates into the market, or made them the prey of political intrigue; and the successful speculator, when his prize was secured, carried the profits to enjoy them where he pleased.

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<sup>1</sup> HARRIS.

Enormous estates had fallen to English companies and capitalists in a country where they never meant to set their foot. Irish noblemen and gentlemen, as, from increasing intercourse, they became conscious of the contrast between the two countries, grew impatient of the wretchedness of their Irish homes, and established themselves in London or Bath. Ireland was robbed of the men whom she could least afford to lose; and the estates were managed on the terms which would yield the largest profit to the owner with the smallest outlay of attention.

The country was still so insecure that small Protestant tenants could not venture to take farms beyond the margin of the great towns. Protestants who established themselves in the country were men of substance, who could afford to build stone houses that would not burn, and to keep retinues of servants who would act as garrisons against attacks from Rapparees. The land was divided, therefore, into large holdings, often of several thousand acres. They were let at long leases, leases for lives, or leases renewable on fines for ever, persons of capital being unwilling to risk the adventure on any but favourable terms; and the first tenant, perhaps, after some unsuccessful attempts at farming and grazing on a great scale, sub-let his holdings to Irish peasants, and glided into the position of an independent idle gentleman.

The power of taking these long leases was limited by law to Protestants; but the word Protestant came

to be construed loosely, and a second class of great tenantry rose beside the first, members of the dispossessed Irish families, who in their own districts could still rule as chiefs with scarcely a sacrifice of dignity, who lived at the old place, retained the old name, swore an unpleasant oath or two at quarter sessions, or when their leases were being signed, and having complied with the lax requirements which, in the remote parts of the country, were all that could be demanded, troubled themselves no further with Church or parson, and were bad Catholics without becoming Protestants.

Into the hands of one or other of these two classes of tenants the chief part of the soil of the three southern provinces was now passing.

Those who were really Protestant retained, for a generation or two, their distinguishing character, but, like the Normans before them, they assimilated themselves to their adopted element, as the fish takes the colour of the gravel on which he lies; and the race of Irish gentry, which acquired so marked a notoriety in the last century, began gradually to shape itself; a race noted, among many characteristics, especially for this, that they hated labour as heartily as the Irish of earlier centuries. Everyone who could subsist in idleness set himself up for a gentleman. Everyone who held a farm, which he could divide and sublet, became a landlord and lived on his rents. The land was let, and underlet, and underlet again, till six rents had sometimes to be provided by the actual cultivator

before he was allowed to feed himself and his family ;<sup>1</sup> while the proprietor and *quasi* proprietor grew into the Irish blackguard, the racing, drinking, duelling, swearing squireen, the tyrant of the poor, the shame and scandal of the order to which he affected to belong.

Of him, however, in his perfection, time was necessary for the full development. At the close of the seventeenth century, there remained in many of the Irish Protestants a leaven of Puritan severity ; in the High Churchmen a degree of Jacobitish piety. Thus strangely composed, amidst commercial disabilities, political discontent, religious division, and a blank and menacing future, the society of the period, now injuriously carped at as that of Protestant ascendancy, began to settle into form. A picture of what it was like will be found in the correspondence of Joshua Dawson, the Castle secretary, which is preserved in Dublin, even to his invitations to dinner. French and Palatine Huguenots continued to flow in, having been secured for a time against the penalties of home-grown dissent. Dublin grew rapidly, streets and squares springing up outside the old walls, and Trinity College spreading over its pleasant meadows.<sup>2</sup> The differences with King William were forgotten. He was thought of only as the deliverer from Popery ; and the

<sup>1</sup> 'It is well known that over most parts of the country the lands are sublet six deep, so that those who actually labour it are squeezed to the very utmost.' — 'Captain Erskine to Mr. Lee (a letter on the Hearts of Steel), April 10, 1775.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Council Notes January 1699.' *MSS.* Dublin.

bronze statue was erected in College Green to his immortal memory. Rapparee hunts went on in the Cork and Kerry mountains. Noted Tories were shot like goats among the crags; chance prisoners being ready as ever to save their lives by informing against their comrades; and juries, as usual, refusing to find verdicts when there was the faintest excuse for evasion.<sup>1</sup> Noted murderers were hung in chains on the high roads, and women were burnt for poisoning. Fairs were established about the county of Dublin, the Archbishop holding his court of pie powder there, and taking toll and custom.<sup>2</sup> The Catholic clergy, undisturbed by the bill for the expulsion of their bishops and regulars, and ostentatiously contemptuous of it, built new chapels in garrison towns, if possible in the

<sup>1</sup> Captain Cooper, writing from Macroom, after a picturesque account of a night foray in the hills, says:

'I have taken a Tory, who offers, if I will save his life, to inform against some private Tories, who are at home and in good reputation. We now find the good effect of hanging harbourers, for it was this Tory's foster-father that informed me of his being at his cabin: the dread of being hanged frightened the fellow to this discovery.

'You had an account of the harbourers when Captain Lloyd's soldiers were killed being tried, and that they were plainly proved, especially one Hierley, to have been harbourers. But the landlord of

this Hierley, speaking of his character, said he knew him to be a very honest man, because he paid his rent punctually, though probably made from the Tories' robberies; and the landlord's uncle being foreman of the jury, they brought him in not guilty, to the amazement of the court.'—'Captain Cooper to Secretary Dawson, February 23, 1702.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> 'Warrant from the Lords Justices, March 18, 1700.' *MSS.* Ibid. Pie powder is *pie poudreux*, dusty foot, a name for pedlars or other itinerant vendors of wares. The court was held at fairs and markets, where such persons carried on their trade, and dealt summary and immediate justice.

face of the barracks.<sup>1</sup> English officers, in spite of test acts and abjuration oaths, attended mass and confession in Galway, and walked in processions among friars and nuns.<sup>2</sup> So directly, so openly the law was defied that, at last, a proclamation was issued, warning the Catholics against presuming too far. To give emphasis to its threats, the Government ordered the actual arrest of a handful of friars; but they were treated so mildly as to invite disobedience. They were either directed to transport themselves, to leave the country, and go where they pleased, or they were placed on board the first ship that was sailing to a Catholic country, and were landed, at the country's expense, at Oporto, Lisbon, or Ostend.<sup>3</sup>

Life in Dublin was sliding into its modern grooves, with balls and parties, races and gambling-tables, eating, drinking, and duel-fighting among the Phœnix thorn trees. Chancellor Methuen runs into debt and slips away from Ireland, owing 3000*l.*, and creating scandal and confusion.<sup>4</sup> Young Mr. Harrison, of Armagh, marries a daughter of Secretary Vernon. The young couple spend their June honeymoon on a riding tour through Wales to Holyhead. The bride, on

<sup>1</sup> The officer in command at Dingle describes a large chapel as being built there so near the barracks that he believed the object was to have the means of collecting men unperceived, and suddenly overpowering the soldiers. *MSS.* Dublin Castle, 1702.

<sup>2</sup> 'Information of Captain Wil-

liam Davidson, Royal Fusiliers.' *MSS.* 1704.

<sup>3</sup> Even such gentle measures as these were rarely resorted to. I find but six cases entered among the Council notes for the five years following the passing of the Act.

<sup>4</sup> 'Mr. Harrison to Secretary Vernon, January 28, 1701.' *MSS.* Record Office.

reaching Dublin, eats herself sick with strawberries; and, in her letters to her father, leaves an unconscious record of the state of education in the upper English households.<sup>1</sup>

Joshua Dawson was buying land, draining, building, planting, improving, and providing for his relations out of his official patronage.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Honored Father,

'I have reseved two of your letters. I should have geven you thanks last Post had I not being ingageed a broad. All the newes wee have hear is a duel betwixt my Lord Shelborn and Couronel Cuningame wich has a occasioned a nagreement of a law suite be twixt them. Wee get yn to our house nex week. I will indever to acqueat myself hear as well as I cane. I am glad my brother nedey [then a midshipman, afterwards the distinguished admiral] is like to be in no danger. I ame glad you have time to go to hadley and to heare you are well. My father [Mr. Harrison senior] is stell in the countre. My mother geves her servis to you and Mr. harreson his humble duty. —I remane your most Duty full Dotter

'MARY HARRISON.

'Dublin, July 20, 1700.'

—*MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary Dawson was the one successful member of a large family, and being the most methodical of men of business, has registered and preserved his correspondence with every member of it. Externally he was as decorous as a Quaker; but he seems, like other people, to

have had adventures behind the scenes. He appointed his brother Richard, a light-hearted vagabond, to a situation in the customs at Cork. Richard writes to thank him:—

'Dear Joseph—for you shall be no longer Joshua but Joseph—for you, like him, have been the instrument of making such provision for your brothers that the plague of Egypt—I mean want of bread—has not been able to reach them. You also, like him, live in a prince's court, and manage the affairs of state. I'm now very inclinable to believe the transmigration of souls according to that of Pythagoras, for certainly Joseph's soul has crept into your body; and the very same Joseph which presided in Pharaoh's court is even now in the secretary's office in the Castle of Dublin. I'd fain know if you remember that passage between you and Potiphar's wife, when you left your garment in her hand. 'Twas certainly an unpardonable crime so to treat the lady having so fair an opportunity. Had I been in your place I should certainly have argued the case a little with Marget, and have been elbow deep in the fleshpots of

The great folks, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, went and came between Dublin and the London season; bishops applying for convoys to Holyhead, and 'a sound vessel for my coach and twelve horses;' <sup>1</sup> peers and judges asking permission to take with them their 4000 or 3000 ounces of wrought plate duty free 'for my own use.' <sup>2</sup> The insurrection had ceased to heave, but the death of the Duke of Gloucester, and a little later of the King, revived the hopes of the Jacobites. With the accession of Anne, the High Churchmen took courage, and again struck at the Dissenters. Bishop King wrote to London to beg that the Regium

Egypt. In the first place, my hearty thanks to you for all I have. In the next, may you live as long as Joseph did, and after death be where he is, which shall always be the prayer of yours,

'RICHARD DAWSON.'

The customs appointment did not save the unlucky Richard. 'The fleshpots of Egypt' and the whiskey tumblers of Cork brought him early to his end, and he died two years after in great misery.

The secretary does not seem to have wished to keep his relations too near him. His brother-in-law, Charles Carr, who had taken orders, was sent to an incumbency in Donegal. He, too, writes his gratitude:—

'Dear brother,—Last night I got safe to the famous city of Raphoe. I hope all friends in the little city of Dublin are well. When I have time to look about me you shall

have a more particular account of this place, which Haly Paly was so much against the building of. Tomorrow I design for my parish, which is twenty-five miles nearer to the world's end. If you have any service to the man in the moon, or any of his neighbours, I'll hand 'em up a letter for you. The bishop and all friends here give their service to you. I desire you'll send the enclosed to Ballyrothery, and if any letters come to you for me that you'd frank them hither. No more at present, but duty to my mother, and love and service to my sister and wee ones, and wherever else it is due.—Yours most affectionately,

'CHARLES CARR.

'Raphoe, July 14, 1704.'

—*Dawson MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Bishop of Derry to Dawson, July 7, 1704.' *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Application to the Viceroy, June 7, 1703.' *Ibid.*



Donum might cease. The Presbyterian marriages, hitherto connived at, were declared illegal, and prosecutions were threatened for incontinency. The Presbyterians complained to the Earl of Rochester. The Lords Justices, Archbishop Marsh, and Lord Drogheda replied to Rochester's inquiries, that the treatment of the Dissenters was peculiarly mild. They were of opinion, that if the bishops should desist altogether from the prosecutions, the Dissenters would be encouraged to make further encroachments on the Church, and their own clergy would be too much discouraged.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Lords Justices to the Earl of Rochester, 1702.' *Clarendon Correspondence.*

## CHAPTER II.

### FIRST ATTEMPT AT UNION.

#### SECTION I.

**T**HOUGH the name of Cromwell was mentioned only with execration; though all parties in Ireland, Catholic and Protestant, Dissenters and Churchmen, contended with each other which should most passionately denounce the memory of the usurper and parricide, yet in the face of the resentment of England at the efforts of the Irish legislature to assert its independence, the savage retaliation for the refusal of the Security Act, and the miserable prospects which now lay before the dependent kingdom, thoughtful Irishmen began to look back regretfully on one feature of the Protector's policy, and earnestly to desire that it might be revived. The shadow of a separate national existence might gratify their pride, but was dearly bought at the price of national ruin. A second conflict between the two Parliaments might lead to the suppression of their liberties and to military government. Under the short-lived Legislative Union, Ireland had enjoyed free trade and every advantage of

English citizenship. Her disabilities had commenced with the restoration of her constitution ; and the more she made her constitution a reality, the more grievous became the burden under which she was crushed. The artisans who had been employed in her woollen trade were now leaving her in thousands. Her wool, the most valuable of her products, she was forced to sell to England only, on England's own terms, and was at once robbed of occupation for her people, and of the price which she might have commanded for her raw material, had she been permitted to dispose of it elsewhere. Under such treatment the two countries became daily more estranged. Ireland considered England unjust and tyrannical, England considered Ireland ungrateful and unmanageable. Neither understood the other ; neither would make allowance for the other ; and, therefore, each went deeper into the courses which most exasperated the other. The interests of Protestantism, the interests of order and liberty, were identical on both sides of St. George's Channel. To England it was all-important that the Anglo-Irish should identify themselves rather with her than with the native race ; but she thought herself secure of them, as if for their own sakes they must adhere to the mother country, being unable to maintain themselves without her help. With the same recklessness with which she mismanaged later her other colonies, she was forcing them in self-defence to make common cause with the Celts, among whom their fortunes were flung. The true remedy, could

England have seen it, was the abolition of the Irish Parliament, and a political incorporation with Great Britain. The Legislative Union with Scotland was already determined on, the details only requiring to be adjusted. At the accession of Queen Anne, could the English manufacturers have looked beyond their ledgers, a union with Ireland could have been brought about with even greater facility. The Catholics were in no condition to resist. The Protestants rather regarded their exclusion from the Eng-<sup>1702</sup>lish Parliament as a wrong, than valued or wished to preserve the counterfeit at Dublin. At that time they would have welcomed gratefully a proposal for union, and Irish grievances and the Irish character, bred of separation, would have dissolved into things of history.

A contemporary tract describes, with curious minuteness, the feelings on the subject entertained in Ireland by reasonable and educated men.<sup>1</sup>

The estates of the English settlers ‘ might be held,’ the writer said, ‘ to belong to England, from the sums of money which England had spent to rescue them from the Irish ; and yet, although so closely interested in the welfare of a country which had cost her so dear, England looked on Ireland only as a rival which, if allowed to prosper, might become dangerous. She did not trouble herself to distinguish between the indigenous Celts and the Colonists, but regarded them all

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<sup>1</sup> *Considerations concerning Ire-* | evidently immediately before the  
*land, and particularly in respect of* | Irish Session of 1703-4.  
*a Union.* Undated, but written |

in the gross as one people, and one people indeed they were in the way to become, unless England took more pains to understand the Irish problem.' 'While,' so this writer continued, 'we looked on ourselves as a distinct kingdom with a legislative power within ourselves, we were more ready to forget England and to bandy and side with the Irish. This bred aversion in the English mind, and increased ours to them. We seemed strange and remote to them, a people setting up for ourselves. They looked on us at a distance. They wished Ireland sunk in the sea, when they might with the same pains have wished it turned to gold.

1700 They regarded Ireland as peopled with men of desperate fortunes, the scum of their nation that had come over with the armies, or with bankrupts and cheats, which had fled thither to defraud their creditors.

'The English colonists, on the other hand, conceived that the mother country had deserted them, left them to shift for themselves, and only intended to repress and keep them low. Having no representatives in the Parliament at Westminster, the wildest calumnies against them passed unanswered there. There was no one to explain the difference between the English and Irish inhabitants; and the one impression was, that they were a disloyal and turbulent people, who could only be rendered harmless so long as they were disabled by poverty.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Considerations concerning Ireland, and particularly in respect of a Union.*

Another Irish statesman, writing at the same time and with the same purpose, repeated the charge in almost identical terms, and foretold the same results.<sup>1</sup>

‘England,’ said Mr. Maxwell, ‘had two ways of keeping Ireland; by an army in the hands of Englishmen, or by checking the growth of the kingdom in trade or wealth, that it might not be dangerous. To govern Ireland by an army was dangerous to English liberty. To keep the country poor was to alienate the inhabitants of all persuasions, and leave it open to occupation by foreign enemies. Thus treated, the Protestant colonists were disposed to close with the Irish and set up a separate interest. An Englishman settling among them quickly degenerated. There was scarcely a man who had been seven years in the country, and meant to remain there, who did not become averse to England, and grow something of an Irishman. From the earliest times these influences had been at work, and Ireland had, in consequence, been a constant thorn in England’s side. Three times in a hundred years she had required to be reconquered, and was always ready to take side with England’s enemies. That the Celtic and the Saxon temperaments were not in themselves incompatible was proved by the example of Wales; and, if the methods which had proved successful in Wales were applied to Ireland, the same result would follow. An

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<sup>1</sup> *Essay on a Union of Ireland with England*, by Henry Maxwell. Dublin, 1704. This writer was

probably the Right Hon. Henry Maxwell of Finnibrogue.

Englishman moving to Wales did not forfeit his birth-right, or cease to be represented in the English Parliament, and no one grudged him whatever wealth he was able to acquire.<sup>1</sup> When he settled in Ireland he fell under other laws and another legislature. He lost the benefit of trade, and, if less hardly taxed, he was regarded with jealous eyes as a rival and a possible enemy. So long as the separate government was continued there would be disagreement and estrangement, to be followed in the future by more serious catastrophes. The true and complete remedy would be a union. The colonists, when represented in the Imperial Parliament, would no longer gravitate towards the Irish, but would rather draw the Irish with them into closer sympathy with England. The moment was favourable. The army and militia were wholly in English hands. Nine-tenths of the land were now held by Protestants of English and Scotch extraction, and under a union would instantly be filled with British immigrants. The loyal population would increase, bringing with them English habits and English inter-

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<sup>1</sup> How little intelligent Irish Protestants wished to preserve the local government, how entirely the difficulty was on the English side, appears distinctly from the form of Maxwell's argument. The refusal of the Union was one of the Anglo-Irish grievances. 'In reason and equity,' he said, 'Ireland had a better plea than Wales. In reason, because the people of Ireland were the offspring of England, which the Welsh were not; the Irish had, therefore, a better title to a child's portion. In equity, because all the massacres, wars, and desolations that the Protestants of Ireland had undergone had proceeded from the single reason, that they were the bulwark and defence of the English Government in Ireland, which could never be overturned till they were destroyed.'—*Essay on a Union.*

ests : while Ireland, admitted to be an integral part of the Empire, with a fair share of its trade, would cheerfully bear her part of the taxation. Her condition, having her own members to speak for her, would be understood. Her wealth, if she became rich, would be English wealth ; her grievances would be English grievances ; and the trade of dishonest schemers, who, in the severed condition of Ireland, found means of promoting their own ends, would be closed for ever.’<sup>1</sup>

If the present opportunity were allowed to escape, Maxwell foretold, with instinctive sagacity, one inevitable consequence.

‘England,’ he said, ‘imagined that she could best govern Ireland by keeping her poor and miserable, and had, therefore, disabled her woollen trade. The manufacture was destroyed. The wool, of which she had enormous quantities, she was compelled to sell only to England, and on England’s own terms. England had the monopoly of the European cloth and blanket market, because English and Irish wool were the best in the then known world. The relative price of it in England and Ireland had been fixed as twenty-five to seventeen, and the difference between the English and Irish prices was made up by an export duty in the

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on a Union*, by Henry Maxwell. Similarly the author of *Considerations concerning Ireland* says, ‘We all saw, for instance, by what steps this last war grew, but could not prevent it, because we were not allowed a Parliament ; and the English Parliament could neither fully understand nor prevent it. Had there been members for Ireland there, and Ireland part of Parliament’s province, remedies could have been found in time.’



Irish harbours. Provided England could really secure the Irish fleeces to herself on these terms, she would draw a handsome profit. But the ingenious persons who had made this arrangement had forgotten that French and Spanish wool, if mixed with a portion of Irish, would then produce as good cloth as the best that came from the Lancashire looms. One sack of Irish wool would work up three French sacks; and thus there would be an enormous premium upon smuggling. Dutch, French, and Irish contraband dealers would outbid the English merchants in the Irish market. The coast line was too long and too difficult to permit effectual watching. The coastguard officers would be bribed to look through their fingers. The legitimate commerce would be suspended. The wool would go to France after all. The French would compete with England for a trade of which Ireland would have been robbed in vain. The manufacturers, who were almost all Protestant, would leave a country where there was no longer employment for them. The Scotch, English, and Dutch artisans would return home, or would go to the American plantations. When a nation was oppressed, men of capital and skill were the first to take wing, as Philip the Second found when he ruined Flanders; and Protestant enterprise being thus driven from the field, Ireland must in a few years relapse to the old proprietors, whose natures were better suited to the lazy life of grazing and sowing, who submitted unwillingly to the thralldom of England, and who would throw themselves

away, as they had always done, upon any Popish Prince who would offer to protect them.’<sup>1</sup>

No prophet ever spoke more accurately, or spoke to deafer ears. Far-sighted political intelligence was set aside as usual by the so-called common sense of practical men. The proposal for a union was looked at askance as a sinister attempt on English pockets, and the fairest opportunity that had arisen since the conquest for bringing together countries which before and after have so sorely tried each other, was deliberately sacrificed to supercilious pride and purblind covetousness.

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<sup>1</sup> *Essay on a Union of Ireland with England*, by Henry Maxwell. Dublin, 1704.

## SECTION II.

In the summer of 1703 Queen Anne's first Irish Parliament was about to assemble for the most eventful session in that country's history. Henry Maxwell, expressing the general sense of intelligent Anglo-Irishmen, had foretold, that, with discouraged industry, and a continued separate political existence, Ireland must inevitably fall back into the hands of the Celts. The minds of the Irish Protestants were set upon a Union. English politicians had determined that there should be no Union. They believed that they could invent means by which Maxwell's prophecy could be defeated, without sacrificing the interests of the Manchester manufacturers. They could not, for their own sakes, allow the country to relapse into a condition, out of which it had been extricated at a cost so severe. As little did they desire it to become strong enough to demand privileges and rights, which they were too jealous to concede . . . The position in which they wished to see Ireland, was that of a dependent province, occupied in growing unlimited wool for the English looms, with the relations of its inhabitants to one another and to England so adjusted, that they could never more be politically dangerous. If they could not eradicate Popery, the Government believed that they could establish a system which would condemn the professors of it to helplessness.

But if their intentions may be conjectured from their subsequent conduct, they did not desire the Protestant supremacy to be too complete or too immediate. Whatever may have been their previous uncertainties, they had now convinced themselves that the ownership of land must henceforward be Protestant exclusively; yet a Catholic population might still be useful as a check on Protestant encroachment. And Catholic and Protestant could both be held in subjection, if each section of the people was made to feel itself dependent upon England for protection against the other. They hoped, probably, that as time went on the natural superiority of the more rational form of religion would assert itself, and that Popery would disappear; but, like most English statesmen, they looked to the immediate problems which lay before themselves, leaving future generations to solve their own difficulties. It would be enough for them if they could invent means to escape compliance with the demand for a Union, which would have brought with it commercial equality.

By the English bill for the repression of Popery, no Catholic was any longer able to buy or inherit real estate in England. The disability had been already so far extended to Ireland, that Catholics were unable to acquire lands which had been forfeited, there. The intention was now to extend the Act to Ireland in all its completeness. The Bill for the Expulsion of the Catholic Dignitaries had been, so far, little more than a form; and a form it might, if desirable, remain. A bill which limited the right of inheriting or buying

real property to Protestants, would enforce itself of its own nature; and, after a generation or two, must destroy the last hold of Catholic owners on the soil of their fathers.

The preparations for this remarkable commentary on the Articles of Limerick were inaugurated with due solemnity. The Duke of Ormond, fresh from his glories at Vigo, and decorated with the thanks of the House of Commons, was sent over as Viceroy. His greatness cast a lustre on his country. His appointment was a compliment which might stand in lieu of more essential concessions, and by his rank and personal influence he was expected to overbear opposition.<sup>1</sup> The heads of the bills which were to form the subject of the business of the session, were carefully considered by the Irish Council through the summer.<sup>2</sup> Six measures which Sir Edward Southwell, the Irish Secretary, described as most useful, and which

<sup>1</sup> His influence was scarcely sufficient, great as it was. Sir Edward Southwell, the Irish Secretary, writes on the 25th September — 'Tis a miserable fatigue we are under; we are forced to use a great deal of claret, and a great many arguments, and all little enough. There is a most strange mixture of Scotch and fanatical principles which sours the mass. They are jealous of everything, and, were it not that my Lord Duke has a great personal interest, and many are ashamed to deny him whom they have talked themselves into, nothing at all would be done'—

'Southwell to the Earl of Nottingham, 25th September, 1703.' *MSS.* Record Office, Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> To soothe Irish sensitiveness, Ormond allowed the Council to discuss the form in which the Money Bill should be presented. He wrote to Nottingham to excuse himself. 'The reason why I did it,' he said, 'was to let them believe it was their own act, and that nothing of this had been agreed on in England, the people here being jealous that everything is already agreed on there.'—'Ormond to Nottingham, June, 1703.' *Ibid.*

‘he knew to be most acceptable,’<sup>1</sup> were sent over in June for the formal sanction of the English Council. The first was an extension of the bill already passed to prevent priests from coming into Ireland from abroad. ‘The Act of the last session,’ Ormond wrote, ‘extended only to dignitaries and regulars; but it being found by experience, that secular priests, educated beyond sea among her majesty’s enemies, did imbibe their sentiments, and at their return did become incendiaries to rebellion, it was conceived necessary to prohibit their return, and the new Act was, in fact, but to reinforce a good law already in being against foreign education.’<sup>2</sup>

The second of the bills, of the acceptableness of which the Secretary entertained no doubt, was the notorious one, ‘to prevent the further growth of Popery.’<sup>3</sup> There is, and there was at the time, an impression that this too celebrated Act was the work of the Irish Parliament; that the English Government consented against their better judgment, and would have preferred it to reject it altogether. Nottingham, perhaps, was not unwilling that such an impression should go abroad; but the correspondence of the Lord Lieutenant and the Secretary tells a different story.

The principle of the bill had been recommended

<sup>1</sup> ‘Southwell to Nottingham, June 12.’ *MSS.* Record Office, Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> ‘The Lord Lieutenant and Council in Ireland to the Earl of Nottingham, June 26th.’ *MSS.*

Record Office. This Act was apparently carried unaltered. It placed secular priests coming from abroad into Ireland on the same footing as regulars. *Irish Statutes*, 2 Anne, cap. 3. <sup>3</sup> 1 Anne, cap. 32.

from England. The heads, as first drawn by the Irish Council, were modelled immediately on the pattern of the English Popery Bill and the English Act providing for the disposition of the forfeited estates; but the model was departed from in one material point. The object was confessedly to prevent Popery from recovering its lost ground, by a law 'to punish those who seduced others, or were seduced themselves from the Protestant religion,' a law 'to prohibit Papists from disinheriting or injuring their Protestant children;' and a law 'to prevent estates, already in the possession of Protestants, from descending to Catholics;' in other words, to prevent Catholics from inheriting or purchasing such estates.

In this condition the heads were sent over. The Privy Council immediately observed, and in writing to the Lord Lieutenant appear to have severely commented on, a very considerable modification of the English precedent. The English Act disabled Catholics from inheriting or purchasing lands anywhere or from anyone. The prohibition in the Irish heads extended only to lands belonging to Protestants. The change had been made intentionally. Nine-tenths of Ireland being Protestant, the Irish Council had designedly left the Catholics free to inherit and purchase from one another.

To those who consider such acts indefensible in any form, the difference will seem small. It is of importance, however, as showing the respective attitudes of the two governments towards the question. The Irish

Council, with a pattern set before them to work from, departed slightly from it in the Catholic interest. The English Council complained. The Irish Council answered, 'that if the Queen and Council in England desired to make the Act co-extensive with the English Act, they had no objection.'<sup>1</sup>

In another direction the Irish Bill was harsher than England desired. 'Limerick and Galway being in great part inhabited by Papists, and having been in all rebellions of fatal consequence to the English,' a provision was introduced that, with the exception of twenty merchants at each place, to be licensed by the Government, no Papist should for the future 'dwell or inhabit' in either of those towns.<sup>2</sup>

To this clause, as directly contradicting the Articles of Galway and Limerick, Ormond anticipated that exception would be taken. He said that he would have prevented the insertion of it, had he been able.<sup>3</sup> The Irish Council, however, insisted that they were the strongest places in the island; that Limerick had endured two sieges in each rebellion, and on each occasion had cost a year's war and half a million of

<sup>1</sup> 'Remarks in the Irish Council on the Bills returned from England.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord Lieutenant and Council to Nottingham, 26th June.' *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Other intended clauses he objected to successfully. 'The clauses,' he wrote, 'concerning Galway and Limerick, I believe, you may think hard and inconvenient; but I could not conveni-

ently hinder it. There were several other things offered in that bill, which I prevented putting in, but those I could not well have done. The others were very hard indeed.' It is plain from the tone of Ormond's letter, that *in some directions* England wished the bill to be lenient.—'Ormond to Nottingham, 29th June.' *MSS.* Record Office.



money. They might have added, had they not shrunk, perhaps, from an inconvenient allusion, that it had cost also a treaty, which, though it ought never to have been signed, yet existed as a fact, and had been confirmed by Parliament.

The bill went to and fro several times between the two Councils before it settled into the form in which it was to be laid before the Irish Legislature. There was general soreness of feeling, soreness about trade, soreness about the conflict of jurisdictions, soreness about the growing Pension List.<sup>1</sup> Objections were raised on both sides. On the purchase and inheritance question England desired that the Act should correspond with the law passed in her own Parliament for the Irish forfeited estates, placing them out of reach of Catholics by any means and for evermore. On other points the Irish Protestants desired more severe restrictions than England would grant. A clause was proposed, for instance, which, in the eagerness to protect the Protestant children of Catholic fathers, would have prevented Catholics from selling their estates under any circumstances, and would have reduced them universally to the position of tenants for life.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Southwell to Nottingham, 17th July.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> The Irish Council deprecated this interpretation. 'The bill,' they said, 'is not intended to hinder Papists from selling *bonâ fide*, but to restrain them from selling purposely to defeat their Protestant heirs, and therefore 'tis

referred to a Court of Equity to examine the circumstances of the case, and determine accordingly; it being impossible to prescribe any other rule which may be suitable to so many different cases.' —'Remarks in the Irish Council, on the Notes upon the Bill returned from England.' *Ibid.*

At last, as if in the hopelessness of agreement, or from a wish to evade responsibility, the Privy Council sent a general sketch of what they desired or were prepared to allow, and left the Irish House of Commons to draw the heads for themselves after the session had commenced.<sup>1</sup>

September at length arrived, the session opened, and business began. Ormond, in the speech from the throne, intimated that there was an opportunity of passing laws which might tend greatly to the establishment of the Protestant Religion. On the subject of which the minds of his hearers were most full, the social prospects of Ireland, and the union of the three kingdoms, he was silent. Both Houses responded loyally; but the Secretary anticipated a stormy session.<sup>2</sup> The Commons were occupied for some days in hearing petitions from Protestant sons of Catholic gentlemen threatened with being disinherited; expelling Mr. Asgill, the member for Enniscorthy, for having

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<sup>1</sup> On the 22nd July, Southwell writes:—‘As to the bill against Popery I find many objections occur to the attorney and solicitor. ’Tis certainly very hard to draw such a bill where many severe things are enacted, and to be able to distinguish or except cases that deserve compassion; and if that Bill is not thought fit to pass, since what is here desired is expressed therein, and that the House here will certainly begin such a bill, it would be of service before that

time to have some hint or information how far the Council of England would think proper to come up to in such a Bill.’—‘Southwell to Nottingham, July 22.’ *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> ‘I wish we may get through as we are. We found them mighty hearty and frank before they were chosen; now they begin to look angry, and forget what they promised.’—‘Southwell to Nottingham, September 25th.’ *Ibid.*

written a heretical book,<sup>1</sup> denouncing the forfeiture commissioners for having reflected scandalously on the Protestants of Ireland,<sup>2</sup> and appointing committees to consider heads of bills. On the 29th they voted an address to the Queen, protesting against the suspicion that they wished to make Ireland independent, and declaring their entire conviction that their welfare depended on the maintenance of the connexion with England. On the 4th of October Southwell wrote 'that the Commons had sate that day to consider the state of the nation ; and, after some hours sitting and considering the many misfortunes the country lay under in point of trade and other circumstances, all the speakers concluded that they did in most earnest manner desire a Union with England.' There had been no intemperance, or declamatory passion. The Secretary was forced to acknowledge, in spite of himself, 'that the temper and good disposition of the debate surprised most people, the loudest grievances being touched with all the true sense, but at the same

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<sup>1</sup> Curiously, Asgill was expelled from the English House of Commons four years later on the same ground, and for the same book.

<sup>2</sup> They resented especially the charge of favouring the native Irish. On the 24th September they passed a resolution, 'That the Protestant freeholders of this kingdom have been falsely and maliciously misrepresented, traduced, and abused as persons that,

through length of time, and contracting new friendships with the Irish, or inter-purchasing with one another, but chiefly through a general dislike of the disposition of the forfeitures, are scarce willing to find any person guilty of the late Rebellion even upon full evidence ; and that such a representation has been one of the great causes of the misery of this kingdom.' *MSS. Record Office.*

time with all the true disposition, as if they desired nothing more.’<sup>1</sup>

So real were the grounds of complaint, so just the demand which was based on those complaints, that the House was disposed to assert its powers in the form in which alone it could command attention. The Government had asked for supplies for two years. A party, led by the Speaker, Solicitor-general Brodrick, insisted that, unless their remonstrances received attention, the money vote should pass for one year only; and, after a hot debate, the Castle had but a bare majority of 122 to 119. The Pension List, a running sore and a scandal for a century, was brought up and sifted. The Crown regarded the hereditary revenue as private property, which it might bestow at its own pleasure. On the Irish Establishment was laid the Regium Donum. On the Irish Establishment were quartered also court favourites, royal mistresses and their bastards.<sup>2</sup> Weary of a separate constitution, which was abused for the sustenance of infamy, and with an honourable eagerness to cast off their shame, they voted that pensions paid out of the kingdom should be taxed four shillings in the pound; and on the 22nd October they framed their more serious discontents and desires into a direct address to the Crown.

They were, and always had been, they said, most loyal; but Ireland, from many causes, was miserable.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Southwell to Nottingham, | the Second, had a pension of 5000*l.*  
October 4.’ MSS. Record Office. | a-year from Ireland; and the Duke

<sup>2</sup> Catherine Sedley, Countess | of St. Alban’s, Charles the Second’s  
of Dorchester, mistress of James | son, a pension of 800*l.*

Their trade was ruined, their industry paralyzed, their manufactures violently taken from them. They were overrun with paupers ; among whom, in consequence of these unjust measures, were now to be found industrious Protestants. In a country where the Papists were so formidable, they humbly conceived that Protestant immigrants ought to have been encouraged ; whereas Protestant families were now removing to Scotland, or emigrating to the plantations. The commerce of Ireland was utterly destroyed. The restrictions and prohibitions had rendered it impossible for any merchant to carry on business. Government officials were intolerably corrupt. Some had made enormous fortunes ; others, holding high and lucrative employments, were residing in England. The Commons implored the Queen to consider their wrongs, and concede the only measure which could really remove them—a firm and strict union between Ireland and England.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Richard Cox, who had succeeded Methuen as chancellor, supported the address of the Commons in a powerful letter to Lord Nottingham : ‘ Your Lordship,’ he said, ‘ will be pleased to consider, that this country is inhabited by a people of several nations, interests, and religions ; and that incendiaries may easily serve themselves of one party or the other ; that all labour under great poverty, occasioned chiefly by the English acts of woollen manufacture and resump-

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<sup>1</sup> ‘ Address to the Queen, October 22.’ *MSS. Record Office.* Cf. *Journals of the Irish House of Commons, October 1703.*

tion ;<sup>1</sup> that if the few English here find themselves oppressed, they will return to their mother country, as many as are able ; and the rest, prompted by indignation, necessity, or despair, will turn Scotch or Irish. There is no remedy so proper for both kingdoms as some sort of union which would enrich and strengthen England, and establish the English interest here, and make it prosper ; for, in that case, all the British would be good Englishmen. We do not capitulate. You may be your own carvers. It seems worthy of your serious thoughts to promote so good a work.’<sup>2</sup>

The forces which govern the evolution of human society are so complex that the wisest statesman may misread them. The highest political sagacity, though controlled by conscience and directed by the purest motives, may yet select a policy which, in the light of after history, shall seem like madness. The ‘event’ may teach the inadequacy of the intellect to compass the problems which at times present themselves for solution ; the ‘event’ alone, therefore, will not justify severe historical censure, where a ruler has endeavoured seriously to do what, in the light of such knowledge as he possessed, appeared at the moment most equitable. But no such excuse can be pleaded for Queen Anne’s ministers, or for the English nation whose resolution they represented, in rejecting these overtures of the Irish Parliament. Opportunities occur in the affairs of

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<sup>1</sup> The Resumption of Forfeitures Act.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Sir R. Cox to the Earl of Nottingham, February 13, 1704.’ MSS. Record Office.

nations which, if allowed to pass, return no more. The offered Union was thrown away when it would have been accepted gratefully as the most precious boon which England could bestow; was thrown away in the meanest and basest spirit of commercial jealousy. No rational fear of possible danger; no anxiety to prevent injustice; no honourable motive of any kind whatever can be imagined as having influenced Lord Nottingham, or the persons, whoever they were, that were generally responsible for the decision. In fatal blindness they persuaded themselves that the Union would make Ireland rich, and that England's interest was to keep her poor. The Queen returned a cold reply, 'that she would give no particular answer at present, but would take the request into consideration.'<sup>1</sup> The consideration never came. The wisdom of the precious resolution was never doubted or reviewed; and from this one act, as from a scorpion's egg, sprung a fresh and yet uncompleted cycle of disaffection, rebellion, and misery.

The union would not be conceded; that much was certain; and the Irish Parliament was left face to face with its own domestic skeleton, to determine by what means the ever-germinating Popery could be held down, and if possible destroyed. With an Ireland united to England, and restored to trade and industry, the Catholics would have sunk before the superior vitality of their vigorous and thriving rivals. If there

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, February 11, 1704.

was to be no trade and no industry, a social condition would establish itself, in which the natural superiority would be on the Celtic and Catholic side; and unless otherwise protected, such Protestants as remained in the island would conform themselves to the only type of character which could be happy in compelled idleness.



## SECTION III.

THE alternative which Ireland was to receive for the refusal of the Union was the Act for the Repres-  
 1703 sion of Popery ; and the unfinished work of the Council was turned over to the House of Commons, who appointed a Committee to draw the heads of a bill. But further correspondence with England was necessary before they could make progress with their work. The interest in the smaller measure, so long as they were considering and debating on the Union, was comparatively feeble ; and to prevent conflict and confusion the House was unwilling to take active steps till the views of the English Cabinet were ascertained with precision. The most powerful influences were brought to bear on the English Court in favour of the Catholics. The heads of a companion act had been already sent over, under which Catholic secular priests remaining in Ireland were required to present themselves before a magistrate, register their names, and take out a licence, of which the Abjuration Oath was a condition. A formal remonstrance, both against this measure and the intended Popery Bill, had been submitted to Lord Nottingham, and a large money subscription had been raised among the Catholic gentry to insure the Privy Council's attention. They appealed to the Articles of Limerick and to the promise distinctly given them, that they should be subject to no disturbance on

account of their religion. King William had undertaken that they should retain all such privileges as they had possessed under Charles the Second, and yet they were threatened with being deprived of the right of punishing disobedient children, or of buying or inheriting property in the land of their fathers. By the Articles of Limerick no oath was to be required of Catholics but the simple Oath of Allegiance. If the Abjuration Oath was to be made a condition of registration, 'no priest could remain in Ireland; none could come thither from abroad under penalty of high treason; and no Catholic could continue to live there being barred the exercise of his religion.' 'They humbly hoped her majesty would refuse to consent to a law which was a breach of faith. Public honour was always sacred, and no people were more sensible of it than the English.'<sup>1</sup>

The clause of the Articles of Limerick affecting the religious position of the Catholics had been confirmed by Parliament. It was part of the law of the land. The appeal was not conclusive, for no treaties can bind eternally when conditions change; but the reply most consistent at once with honour and the interests of Ireland would have been to concede the Union. No Repression of Popery Act would have been then needed, if Protestantism had been allowed fair play. But Ireland appeared to the English ministry to be a country where honour, conscience,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Case of the Roman Catholics in relation to the bill against the repression of Popery.' *MSS.* Record Office.

and common-sense were words which had no application. General directions were given that the bill was to be proceeded with, and, on the 19th November, the heads were laid on the table of the House of Commons by Tenison, the member for Lowth.

The summer work of the Council formed the evident basis on which the Committee had proceeded. The preamble stated, as a reason for further legislation, 'that the great lenity and moderation hitherto extended in making and executing laws against the Popish religion, had produced no other effect, or been otherwise looked on by them, than as connivance or encouragement.' The existing laws were evaded. Catholic fathers disinherited their Protestant children. Papists had recovered possession of estates which they had forfeited by rebellion, by eluding the Intermarriage Act. The priests, by secret proselytizing and perversions, were undermining the Protestant interest and dividing families. It was proposed therefore, first, that, according to English precedent, to seduce a Protestant from his faith should be treated as a crime, both in the pervert and in the person perverting him. The Foreign Education Act must be more strictly enforced. Catholic parents must be compelled to allow sufficient maintenance to their Protestant children; and 'to the intent that no lordship, manor, or tene-ment, whereof any Protestant was, or hereafter should be, at any time seised, should come into possession of a Papist,' the Committee recommended that no Catholic should be left in a position to recover such

lands under any circumstances whatsoever. Their power to purchase or inherit from one another the Committee, like the Council, still proposed to leave undisturbed; with this provision only, that the estates, real and personal, of a Catholic having only Catholic children, should descend in gavelkind, and be divided in equal portions among them. If the eldest son chose to declare himself a Protestant, he might resume his rights as heir-at-law.

The disarming Act had been neutralized by a dispensing power committed to the Viceroy. This power the Committee alleged to have been abused, and begged that it might be withdrawn. The Limerick and Galway clause reappeared, but was prospective in its operation. No Catholic should, for the future, acquire property in those towns, or come to reside within them. The present inhabitants might remain on finding sureties for their good behaviour.

These positions, with a clause disabling Catholics from voting at elections without taking the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, constituted the chief features of the Repression of Popery Act, as the heads left the Irish House of Commons and were sent to England for final revision. It is to be observed that the reservation of power to the Catholics to buy and inherit land among themselves was still maintained, in spite of the exception which had been taken by the English Cabinet. The Speaker, attended by the whole House, presented the bill to the Viceroy, to be forwarded to London.

‘The opposition constantly made in England,’ they said, ‘by the Papists of Ireland, against whatever might tend to the security of her majesty’s Protestant subjects, induced them to lay the heads before his grace in that solemn manner. They thought it the more particularly necessary, being informed and convinced that great sums of money had lately been raised by them to oppose the passing of a Bill of that nature in England.’<sup>1</sup>

Communication between Dublin and London was still irregular. In mid-winter especially the passage yacht was sometimes detained indefinitely at Holyhead by heavy westerly weather; and Ireland, after the despatch of the heads of this and the Priests Registration Bill, remained for six weeks in a fever of suspense and excitement.

Rumour said that England meant to favour the Catholics. The short December days had brought Rapparee outrages. The extreme Protestant party made use of them to excite terror and indignation; and the Solicitor-general (Brodrick) was so violent, that Ormond gave him a public reprimand.<sup>2</sup> The Commons intimated plainly, that if the Popery Bill returned to them materially changed, they would refuse the supplies after all; and both Southwell and the Viceroy wrote to deprecate alterations in the strongest language. ‘The House of Commons,’ they said, ‘was

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons’ Journals*, November 24.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Southwell to Nottingham, January 18, 1704.’ *MSS. Record Office*.

extremely intent upon it. They entreated Nottingham to see personally to its progress and dispatch.'<sup>1</sup>

There was no occasion for their alarm. At the end of January news came that the bill was coming back, and coming in a shape which would be welcome to all good Protestants. On the 10th February it arrived. From Ormond's anxiety it might have been inferred, that the disposition in England was really unfavourable. Yet the bill had been changed, not in a direction to make it bear less heavily on the Catholics, but to bring it rather more close to the English Act, and to abridge the small indulgence which the Irish Council had endeavoured so earnestly to preserve.

In the shape in which this celebrated statute was returned from England to be passed into law by the Irish Parliament, the provisions of it <sup>1704</sup> were these:—

The first part of the preamble had been struck out, perhaps as reflecting too severely on the imbecility of the executive government. 'Emissaries of the Church of Rome,' it was thought sufficient to say, 'taking advantage of the weakness and ignorance of some of her majesty's subjects, and the sickness and decay of their reason and senses, daily perverted them from the Protestant religion, to the disquiet of the realm, and the discomfort and disturbance of private families. In their hatred of true religion, persons professing Popery had refused to provide for their

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<sup>1</sup> 'Letters from Secretary Southwell and the Duke of Ormond, December 1703 and January 1704.' *MSS. Record Office.*

Protestant children. They had evaded the laws designed to keep them in check. They had it in their power to make divisions by their votes at elections, and to use other means, to the destruction of the Protestant interest. Perversions therefore from Protestantism to Popery were brought under the premunire statute, as the heads had recommended. The penalties of the Foreign Education Act were extended to all Catholics who sent their children abroad without licence. Power was given to the Court of Chancery to compel Catholic parents to make sufficient allowances to their children of another religious profession than their own; and then coming to the great matter, the Act declared, that where the eldest son of a Catholic father was a Protestant, the father became tenant for life only, and was disabled from selling his estate if he desired it. No Catholic might be guardian or trustee to orphan children though born of Catholic parents. If the parents were living, and one of them was a Protestant, the Court of Chancery was directed to see that they were brought up in the Communion of the Established Church.

A middle course was taken with the debated purchase and inheritance question. Under no condition whatsoever were Catholics to be permitted to buy lands, or gain any additional hold on the real estate of the country. They were not even to take leases for more than thirty-one years. Lands already in the hands of Protestants must descend to the Protestant nearest of kin. Lands in possession of Catholics,

whose children were Catholics also, were to descend in gavelkind, as the Irish Committee had proposed. The eldest son, however, might inherit, as the Committee recommended, under the common law, and retain his privilege as sole heir to the real estate if he declared himself a Protestant within a year of his father's death.<sup>1</sup>

An Act, passed under Charles the Second, had required the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy as a condition of acquiring property in corporate towns. Had the law been observed, the late rebellion would have been prevented. Limerick and Galway being places of great military importance, the English Council had now consented to the clause which forbade fresh Papist families from settling there; while Papists already occupying tenements within the walls were required to find security for their good behaviour. A blow was aimed also at local superstitions, by an order that all crosses, pictures, inscriptions, and objects of public devotion should be destroyed by the magistrates; gatherings at stations and places of pilgrimage were to be treated as riotous assemblies, and persons collecting on such occasions were to be fined or publicly whipped.<sup>2</sup>

Such was this Act as it affected Catholics after being

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<sup>1</sup> The Court of Chancery in such cases was to make an order for the maintenance of the younger children up to a third value of the estate. Nor did the Act, as is sometimes imagined, enable a younger brother to supplant the eldest by conforming. The eldest son alone was laid under a direct temptation to change his religion from interested motives.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Anne, cap. 6. *Irish Statutes.*



remodelled by the English Cabinet; but provisions were attached which reflected the double-edged intolerance of the members of the Anglican Communion. A special section declared that no person should take benefit by the Act as a Protestant, who did not conform to the Church of Ireland as by law established. If, on the death of a Protestant landowner, the natural heir was a Catholic, the Catholic was disabled; but if the Protestant next of kin, to whom the estate would lapse, happened to be a Presbyterian, he was to be passed over in favour of a more remote member of the Establishment. As if this was not enough, the English Test Act, of which in the previous correspondence not a word had been breathed, was found to have been introduced as a parenthesis. The taking the sacrament, according to the rites of the Established Church, was made a condition of holding any office, civil or military, under the Crown, above the rank of a constable. The exclusive privileges, so long desired by Irish bishops, were thrown into their hands as a make-weight in a bill of a totally opposite tendency. The Presbyterians, the Independents, the Huguenot immigrants, the Quakers, not protected in their public worship, like the English Dissenter, by a Toleration Act, were swept under the same political disabilities, and were at once cut off from the army, the militia, the civil service, the commission of the peace, and from seats in the municipal corporations.

What could have been the object of this most strange and most unlooked-for episode? Was it a

move of Lord Godolphin's, as Burnet says, to defeat a bill which he could not directly oppose, by introducing a clause which he trusted would prove fatal to it? Was it, as Dr. Reid considers, that Archbishop King, finding his direct attacks on the Dissenters unsuccessful, induced his friends in England to insert the clause in the last stage of a bill on which he knew the Irish Commons to have set their hearts, when they must either accept the form in which it was returned to them, or lose it altogether? The motives of public men are rarely so complicated as the critics of their actions conjecture. Lord Godolphin's object was to pacify the Irish Parliament, and obtain the necessary supplies without granting the Union, or making commercial concessions which would irritate the English manufacturers. The Catholics were politically powerless. No favour shown to Popery would improve the Government majority. The Presbyterians, though half the Protestant population, and incomparably the most earnest in their Protestantism, were chiefly farmers, tradesmen, and artisans. Out of three hundred seats in the House of Commons they commanded but ten; the little favour felt towards them had been shown in a recent vote, which declared the *Regium Donum* an unnecessary expense; while the Test clause was the surest means to reconcile the bishops and High Church Peers to an Act which their Jacobite sympathies might have otherwise inclined them to resist.

A slight agitation followed the announcement of so unexpected an addition to the Act, but not sufficient to

cause uneasiness at the Castle.<sup>1</sup> The bill passed through the first and second readings without discussion. On the 22nd of February the House of Commons went into committee. The Catholics had applied to be heard by counsel in opposition; the request had been considered fair; and Sir Theobald Butler, who had been Tyrconnell's Solicitor-general, and Sir Stephen Rice, who had been chief Baron, spoke at the bar as their representatives. The appeal of course was to the Articles of Limerick. The Act before the House admitted no distinctions, and applied to the whole of Ireland. Catholics specially comprehended in the Articles of Limerick and Galway had been promised undisturbed possession of their properties; and if the Act became law, their sons, it was urged, should they choose to become Protestants, could take away their control over their estates. By the Articles generally all Catholics were restored to such rights as they had enjoyed under Charles the Second. In that reign they had possessed an undoubted right of purchasing land, and of this they were to be deprived. In that reign a son succeeded to his father's property though the father might be a Protestant and the son a Catholic; while, if the gavelling clause was carried, in a generation or two there would scarcely be a remembrance of any Catholic family in any part of Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> Southwell, who must have known Godolphin's real wishes, reported that the bills had been well received: 'The Sacramental test, added to the Popery Bill,' he said, 'made a slight stir, which is dying off.'—'Southwell to Nottingham, February, 1704.' *MSS. Record Office.*

It was needless to argue an inconsistency which could not be denied. Treaties, it was admitted in reply, were meant to be observed, but were not intended to last for ever. A power of revision resided necessarily in the legislature; and the legislature could not be prevented from passing laws which might be required for the safety of the Government.

This position the Catholics did not attempt to question. No articles, Sir Stephen Rice acknowledged, could take away the right of Government to protect itself against dangerous enemies. He protested only that the Catholics had given no fresh provocation, or had made themselves in any way legitimate objects of suspicion.

Here of course the real difficulty lay. To sincere Protestants, the Catholics could not, in the nature of the case, be other than objects of suspicion. They had lost nine-tenths of their estates, and must, if they were mortal, desire to recover them. As certainly, they must be friends to the Pretender, and enemies of the Hanoverian succession. They had themselves admitted that no Catholic could conscientiously take the Abjuration Oath.

'The arguments,' wrote Southwell, giving an account of the discussion to Nottingham, 'were considered and answered, and all the clauses against the Papists passed unanimously, till we came to the sacramental test, on which we had a two hours' debate. It was objected, that we were creating a new distinction of Church and Dissenters, when there ought to be only

that of Protestant and Papist; that it weakened our Protestant interest, when we were provoking the Papists afresh; and that it was an ill-requital to the Dissenters, who had so signalized themselves in the defence of Derry; that, in case of foreign invasion, it put them out of capacity, without great penalty, of showing the same zeal; that it was more sensible to the Dissenters here because they have no toleration by law as in England; and some very few, in the height of their resentment, were pleased to say, they thought this was added to hazard the bill. All this was answered, and showed that no particular hardship was designed towards them; that, in fact, there were more of the Church at Enniskillen and at least one-half in Derry; that even in the North above eight in ten of the gentry were Churchmen; that, although, in those parts, the commonalty might exceed in Dissenters, parish officers were excused in the bill; that, in cases of public danger, all people were obliged, in duty and interest, to oppose the common enemy; that, if ever we hoped a union with England, it could not be expected they would ever do it, but upon the same terms that they stand upon; and that, in England, the Dissenters have both writ for and preached conformity when it was for their interest and advantage.' <sup>1</sup>

To throw out the clause was to lose the work of the session. Twenty members of the House of Commons preferred even this alternative as a less evil than a

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' Sir Ed. Southwell to the Earl of Nottingham, February 26, 1704.' MSS. Record Office.

resolution so impolitic and unjust. But the bill was carried by an enormous majority. It passed with equal ease through the House of Lords, and became law.

The Act requiring the Catholic priests who remained in Ireland to register their names and take out licences was returned from England with the Popery Act, and was passed simultaneously. It re-appeared without the dreaded provision, which was to have exacted the Abjuration Oath ; but had the execution of the law been equal to its verbal severity, it would still have sufficed to extinguish Irish Popery within the compass of a generation. The existing Secular Clergy were allowed to remain and officiate ; but their number was not to be recruited from abroad, nor were any more to be ordained in Ireland. To prevent evasion, every priest was required to return his name, his parish, his age, the time and place where he received his orders. If he could prove that he was one of the old set he was to receive his licence ; if not, he was required to leave the country, under pain of death if he came back. To make the disappearance more rapid, a pension of 20*l.* a year, afterwards raised to 30*l.*, was assigned to every priest who would come over to the Establishment.<sup>1</sup> Finally, as the English Parliament had determined the descent of the crown in a Protestant line, should Queen Anne die without a natural heir, and ‘ inasmuch as it most manifestly appeared that the Papists of Ireland, and other disaffected persons, did

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Anne, cap. 7.

still entertain the hope of disappointing the succession of the crown to the House of Hanover,' an attempt to tamper with the Act of Succession in the Pretender's interest, by act or deed, was declared to be high treason.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2-Anne, cap. 5. *Irish Statutes.*

## SECTION IV.

CAREFULLY as the Bill for the Repression of Popery had been drawn, it appeared at first as if it were to take its place among the many statutes which existed only as bugbears. By the 13th of the 10th of William, Papists had been disqualified from practising as solicitors; yet the courts were as full as ever of Catholic attorneys; and the attorneys, having established their own existence in the teeth of one law, found little difficulty in picking holes in another. Any means were thought legitimate to defeat a statute in itself unjust; and by annuities, by fictitious conveyances, by incumbrances and settlements, by fines and leases, by all the unnumbered weapons lying in a lawyer's armoury, Catholic landowners were still enabled to determine, after their own pleasure, the descent of their properties; while the executive was equally careless in enforcing the acts immediately penal. Catholic gentlemen were not disarmed. Catholic bishops held ordinations as usual, and were not interfered with. The majority of priests laughed at the Registration Act, officiated without licence, and no one meddled with them. Students went and came between Ireland and the French and Spanish Universities. Catholic schools continued open. Catholic tutors taught their pupils undisturbed in private houses. In vain, two years later, the Commons voted



that magistrates who neglected their duties were 'betrayers of the liberties of the kingdom and enemies of the Protestant interest.' It seemed as if laws against Celt or Papist in Ireland were only made to be laughed at; as if they had been passed to silence the clamours of Parliament, and were paralyzed by the purposed inaction of those whose business was to see them enforced. The coldness in one direction was the more remarkable when contrasted with the heat and vigour in another. The bishops had been bribed into consenting to the Popery Bill by the clause against the Dissenters; and they settled to their work, when the law was passed, with the zeal of heartfelt enjoyment. The Presbyterian magistrates in Ulster were cleared out. 'Men of little estate, youths, newcomers, and clergymen, having nothing to recommend them but their going to church,' were appointed in their places. Out of twelve aldermen of Derry, ten were Nonconformists, and were ejected. At Belfast, the entire corporation was changed; and the power being now in their hands in town and country, the bishops fell upon the grievance which had so long afflicted them, of the Presbyterian marriages. Catholic marriages did not trouble them; for Catholic priests were lawfully ordained, and could perform valid sacraments. Dissenting ministers were unsanctified upstarts, whose pretended ceremonial was but a licence for sin. It was announced that the children of all Protestants not married in a church should be treated as bastards, and, as the record of this childish insanity declares, 'Many

persons, of undoubted reputation, were prosecuted in the bishops' courts as fornicators, for cohabiting with their own wives.'<sup>1</sup>

Too late the English ministers became conscious of their mistake, and endeavoured to repair it. The absurdity of crippling the right arm of Irish Protestantism, with the Pretender threatening a descent on Scotland, was too glaringly obvious. If the Test Act was to be the only reality, and the Popery Acts were to be left to sleep, the Test must be taken off again, and some fresh Acts passed against the Catholics, of which evasion should be impossible. The Earl of Pembroke was sent over in Ormond's place to introduce, if possible, some elements of common sense into the distracted administration. Never constant for more than a year or two to a definite policy, the history of the English Government of Ireland is, from first to last, a history of attempts to rule by humouring the party which was for the moment uppermost, of the wildest blunders permitted for an immediate object, to be followed by efforts always ineffectual to undo them after the mischief had been accomplished.

Pembroke came to Dublin in the summer of 1707, bringing with him George Doddington as Secretary. The Earl of Sunderland, brought for <sup>1707</sup> a time into office, used the opportunity to press a reversal, if possible, of the extraordinary policy of the Test clause; and though his influence was far from paramount in Godolphin's administration, it can

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<sup>1</sup> *Loyalty of the Presbyterians in Ireland. Reign of Queen Anne.*

be traced in Doddington's appointment, and in the language of Pembroke's speech at the opening of the Irish Parliament, which dwelt generally, but emphatically, on the danger from the overwhelming numbers of the Catholics, the necessity for unanimity among Protestants, and the desirableness of discovering fresh means to strengthen the Protestant interest.

The mind of the Commons was still fastened upon the object which, in the Session of 1703, they had sought so earnestly and so ineffectually. In the address they expressed their hopes for 'a more comprehensive union.' The Queen was made to answer, as before, vaguely, that she would endeavour 'to make the union of all her subjects as extensive as possible.' The words passed as more hopeful than an absolute refusal; and the House settled itself to the work of which the Journals indicate only what was done, being silent over what was attempted. The supplies were voted freely. Next to the supplies the Test had been Lord Sunderland's chief anxiety. Doddington was obliged to report that the bishops' influence among the Lords, and the High Church leanings so strangely visible in the Lower House, rendered the removal of it impracticable.<sup>1</sup> Suggestions for an improve-

<sup>1</sup> Doddington's letter to Sunderland on the subject throws the most curious light on the temper of the Irish Parliament: 'As to the other grand affair,' he wrote, on the 14th of August, after mentioning the supply vote—'I mean the taking off the Sacramental

Test; it was impracticable in this House, and will ever be for as long as this Parliament continues, which is made up of two-thirds of as High Churchmen as any in England. You would hardly believe there should be such a creature as an Irish Protestant Jacobite, and vet

ment of the Popery Bill were received more warmly. The Commons had been perplexed with details of the many methods by which Catholic solicitors were untying the knots of the Act of 1704. Lands had been given away, leases had been granted for a thousand years to hinder Catholic estates from falling to apostate children. Heirs apparent, or eldest sons, of wavering faith, had been smuggled away to England, or married as minors to Catholic ladies, that the priest's influence might be sustained by the wife's. Special Acts were passed to meet particular instances; and the heads of a general Act, from which escape would be at last impossible, were carried through the Lower House with rapidity and enthusiasm; notwithstanding all that Doddington had reported of the humour of the majority of the members.

'tis most certain there are a great many such monsters. I can prove it. This country is very near as much under the power and influence of the clergy as the people of Italy are; and, if care be not taken of them, they will put what measures they please on the civil power.' And again on the 28th: 'This people ought to be gratified with all laws that are for the better government of human society, and for their preservation against the Papists and their adherents the High Flyers, with which this country swarms. I entirely agree with you, that nothing less than the taking off the Sacramental Test can remedy the growing evils this country labours

under; but unless the government will call a new Parliament, and sincerely espouse the taking it off, it will not be done. Two-thirds of the members of the present House of Commons are High Flyers. In the other House the bishops, every man of them, are as high as Laud was, and have so great an influence over the Temporal Lords, most of whom have as little sense as Lord Abercorn, that they are at least six to one against the honest Lords. Believe me this country is priest-rid, very near as much as the Portuguese and Spaniards are.' — 'Doddington to Sunderland, August 14 and 28.' MSS. Record Office.

The Highchurchmanship, however, which in the country gentlemen was controlled or modified by Protestant traditions, appeared among the Spiritual Peers in its true colours. To them a Catholic was but an erring brother, while a Calvinist was a detested enemy. The Catholics were good friends to the Pretender, and, in the event of a revolution, might unite ultimately with themselves. Whigs, Low Churchmen, and Nonconformists were malignant Hanoverians and foes, to their very heart of hearts, of Sacerdotalism and Episcopal authority. Measures which would give additional strength to Protestantism in the true and proper sense, were things to be deprecated and resisted. They did not attempt direct opposition, but they introduced modifications, which would make the bill as futile as its predecessors; and in this condition the heads of the New Popery Act were sent over with others to the English Council.

‘I beg leave in particular,’ wrote Doddington in transmitting them, ‘to mention the bill for preventing the further growth of Popery, which the holy prelates have been mumbling and doing their best to render it ineffectual. The Papists are alarmed at this bill, which was designed to strengthen the one that passed formerly, and prevent the settling their estates in such a manner as would evade the first Act, and hinder their estates from descending to their Protestant children. When I reflect how unaccountable an act it is for a Protestant Government to authorize Romish priests to exercise their religion, and at the

same time the Dissenting ministers are made liable to very severe penalties for acting according to their persuasions, I cannot but hope some cure will be found out to put an end to so unreasonable a proceeding. We require alterations in the Council, which in truth is a scandalous board, and by such steps may allay that violent temper, which has been countenanced and preached up here since the death of the late King. And then a new Parliament, with the countenance of the Government, will take off that scandalous distinction, or rather infamous clause, and do such other things as may be for the real honour of the Queen and the good of her subjects.’<sup>1</sup>

The Popery Bill came back, but the bishops’ handiwork being left entirely or in part undefaced, a Committee of the Commons reported upon it unfavourably, and it was rejected.<sup>2</sup> A second set of heads were introduced by a private member, but at so late a period in the session that nothing more could be done with it. The Irish Parliament was falling into a habit which became afterwards the rule, of meeting only in alternate years. The Catholics were reprieved, and the bishops had secured their gratitude in the event of half foreseen contingencies.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Doddington to Sunderland, September 2.’ *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> *Commons’ Journals*, October 18, 1707.

## SECTION V.

WHILE the Irish Jacobite House of Lords was thus  
1708 openly taking the side of the Catholics, the  
Pretender was preparing at St. Germain's for a  
descent upon Scotland. An attack on Ireland, whether  
as a feint or as a reality, formed an important part of  
his plan. As soon as he should have established him-  
self among his Highland friends, a French squadron  
was to come round to Galway, where the Catholic  
inhabitants, led by the country gentlemen, who had  
been officers in his father's army, were prepared to  
receive their allies. The government had received  
information of what was intended, and, so far as they  
were able, had taken measures to secure so important  
a town. The difficulties which they experienced suf-  
ficed to show, that the Limerick and Galway Clauses  
in the Popery Act were no gratuitous insults to a loyal  
and unoffending set of people, but resolutions of mere  
self-defence, of which the fault was, that they were left  
unexecuted. An order was sent to the mayor to call  
before him the principal Catholic gentlemen of the  
country, to offer them the Abjuration Oath, and, if  
they refused to swear, to secure their persons. The  
mayor, though of necessity a Churchman by profession,  
yet wore his churchmanship as an official cloke, with a  
sound Catholic body concealed below it. He invited  
the gentlemen to repair to Galway as he was directed.

They obeyed—Lord Bophin and half a hundred others, with their servants and retinue of friends. They declined the oath as a matter of course. The mayor directed them to consider themselves prisoners on parole inside the walls, precisely in the place where they would be most useful when the French should arrive; and Colonel Eyre, the governor, with a handful of soldiers in the castle, found himself overmatched and virtually at their mercy.<sup>1</sup> The condition of Galway was the condition of all the counties where the Articles of Limerick had left the Catholic strength unbroken. In the event of an insurrection the only force which could be relied upon to oppose the Pretender was as usual the Ulster Militia, and the Ulster Militia had been annihilated by the Test clause. The rank and file of the regiments had been almost exclusively Presbyterian. Being no longer permitted to have a single officer of their own persuasion they refused to obey the summons when invited to enlist; and Ireland, with Catholics, Protestants, traders, landowners, farmers, all classes and all creeds, disunited and mutually exasperated, lay at the time of trial once more without defence. Most precious commentary on the proceedings of all parties who had been concerned in bringing her to such a pass! The slightest success in Scotland would have led to the landing of a French army, and although an insurrection would have been less mischievous than in 1641,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Colonel Eyre to Secretary Dawson, March 30 and April 11, 1708. MSS. Dublin Castle.



and in 1689, for there was as yet no glimmer of returning prosperity which could be again ruined, fresh millions must have been supplied from the English exchequer, and the wretched business of reconquest undertaken once more from the beginning.

Happily the Pretender's expedition failed; the peril passed by; and English statesmen who had leisure to spare for the unlucky country, and intelligence enough to be conscious of the disgrace which this perpetual mismanagement entailed on them, renewed their resolution to take warning, and for the future to follow wiser courses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Militia catastrophe in Ulster gave a tempting opportunity to the High Church party. King William, whose popularity among the Protestants had suffered through his consent to the commercial disabilities, was again becoming a national hero in contrast with the Tory leanings of Queen Anne. Whigs, Low Churchmen, and Nonconformists looked back on the memory of King William, and looked forward to the Hanover succession with passionate regret on one side, and passionate hope on the other. The bishops and their friends took occasion, from the refusal of the Presbyterians to enlist, to represent to the Queen that they, and only they, were loyal to herself. An address was drawn by Pooley, Bishop of Raphoe, and signed by himself and his clergy, which throws an amusing light on the temper of these gentlemen.

To the Queen's Majesty. The Humble Address of the Bishop and Clergy of Raphoe at a Visitation held August 18, 1708, at Raphoe in Donegal:

'Please your majesty, — We, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, daily remember your happy accession to the throne, with an entire affection, *which admits no rival alive or dead*. We admire the wisdom of your conduct through the whole series of your reign, particularly in that stupendious (sic) instance the Union. We adore God for the various scenes of wonder which have hitherto attended your arms and those of your allies. By the Pretender's coming, seeing, and flying North Britain instead of overcoming, Providence seems to indicate your majesty shall not need their swords who will not draw them unless as officers. The hero Eugène served as a private

The Irish High Churchmen required a bridle. Lord Wharton, a more determined Whig than Pembroke, was chosen to force the hand of those fanatical or dishonest schemers, and, if possible, compel them to consent to the repeal of the Test. The Irish bishops, more fortunate than they deserved, found a champion, where they might least have looked for one, in the vicar of Laracor. Jonathan Swift, against whom Anne's prejudices had closed the hopes of advancement in England, had been recommended by Lord Somers

soldier under your hero Marlborough. 'Tis to be feared that subjects who will not be for you, but on such conditions as repeal those laws which are framed as the bulwark against Popery and all its adherents, may be against you. As for us, we shall preach active obedience for conscience sake to her for whom God has done marvellous things whereof we rejoice, and pray that these wonders may reach from Oudenarde to Versailles till Christendom and your adversary shall humbly beg that protection and honourable peace which he proudly boasted to give, but never on honourable terms.

'JOHN RAPHOE.'

Unfortunately for the Bishop, he could not forward this effusion directly to the Queen. It could be transmitted only through the Irish Council, and he seems to have been afraid of the satirical criticism of

Archbishop King. He enclosed it to the Lords Justices with a letter, in which he said:—"Tis signed by all the clergy who were present at the visitation, except one, who declined, because of the words, "with an entire affection, which admits no rival alive or dead." All the rest thought an entire affection for the Queen couldn't admit a rival alive or dead, and therefore wouldn't alter the paragraph to humour one who entertained any thought of a rival of her sacred majesty, not foreseeing whither such thoughts might tend.'

'If the address must be read publicly by some belonging to the Council, I humbly beseech your Excellencies, that the Archbishop of Dublin, or the Bishop of Clogher may not read it, lest they give it a turn of madness, or make it look as if it were words tending to sedition.'—*MSS.* Dublin Castle, 1708.

to Wharton's patronage. Wharton, for reasons of his own, paid no attention to Somers's request; and Swift, who never forgave an injury, paid home this fresh instance of undeserved neglect. He sketched a character of Wharton himself which, merited or unmerited, will cling to his memory while the English language endures. The Dissenters he regarded with the intense detestation which men of powerful minds entertain for what they call fanaticism; and, in his own extraordinary misconception of the true character of the Irish problem, he left behind him one more evidence, that the fanaticism of fools may be keener-sighted than the most masculine of intellects. The removal of the disabilities being, as he knew, the measure which Wharton most desired, he attacked it in a pamphlet, which supplied the Opposition with an armoury of arguments—arguments at the moment unanswerable, which later history has too effectually answered. The Presbyterians, he insisted, constituted the only political danger to which Ireland was exposed. He compared the Catholics to a chained lion bound fast, with teeth drawn and claws pared to the quick; the Presbyterians to an angry cat free to fly at the throat of any innocent passer-by. The Catholics, he said, were as inconsiderable as women and children, powerless to hurt and doomed to certain disappearance in one or two generations. The greater part of their lands were taken from them; they could buy no more, and the little that they retained must every year grow less under the law. The priests were registered,

and, as they dropped off, could have no successors. The peasantry without leaders, without discipline, without natural courage, were but hewers of wood and drawers of water, and, however well they might be inclined, were for ever powerless to do hurt.

The Viceroy, whatever his moral character, saw deeper into the Irish problem than the future Dean of St. Patrick's. On the 5th May, 1709, he met the Parliament. It was unchanged, for it had no natural period except the death of the reigning sovereign, and had not been dissolved. The two main parties into which the House of Commons was divided, were the nominees on one side of the peers and bishops, and those on the other who inherited the principles of the Revolution. Between them lay an undetermined section, which in the last session had inclined to the High Flyers, but had been frightened by the Pretender's attempt, and by the extreme danger to which Ireland had for a few weeks been exposed. The Viceroy said, that 'he was directed to lay before them a consideration of infinite consequence,' 'to put them in mind of the inequality in numbers between the Protestants and Papists of Ireland,' and 'the melancholy experience they had had of the good nature of that sort of men when they had it in their power to distress or destroy them.' 'They must consider, therefore, whether bills were not wanting to confirm the law for preventing the growth of Popery; and, secondly, the evident necessity of cultivating and preserving, by

some means or other, a good understanding among all denominations of Protestants.’<sup>1</sup>

The Commons replied, ‘that they had found, by dearly-bought experience, that the Protestant religion was no longer safe than while it was not in the power of Papists to injure them.’ ‘They called to mind with abhorrence the satisfaction which too visibly appeared in the faces and in the insolent behaviour of the generality of them in the late attempt of the Pretender.’ ‘They felt themselves bound to maintain the Church as by law established;’<sup>2</sup> but they were conscious of the danger of division.’ ‘They could not be negligent of their common safety, or of the affection and courage which had been shown by the Dissenters against the French and Irish Papists.’

The concluding words evidently referred to the Test, and were a plain confession of the injustice of it. But either Swift’s arguments had been too successful, or they represented too nearly the average opinions of Churchmen. Direct measures of relief to Dissenters were found as impossible as in the preceding session. In the direction of safeguards against Popery, the lower House required no exhortations. In spite of the Act against reversals of outlawries, the Queen, it was rumoured, meditated the restoration of many or of all

<sup>1</sup> *House of Commons’ Journals*, May 5, 1709.

<sup>2</sup> In a High Church pamphlet, published five years after, there is the singular confession, ‘that the phrase Protestant interest means in Ireland an interest distinct from

and even opposed to the Established Church; Atheists, Deists, Socinians, Sectaries, going under the name of Protestants.’—*A Long History of a Short Session of a certain Parliament*. Dublin, 1714.

the families attainted for the last rebellion. If Ireland was ever to have peace there must be an end of these recurring threats of a disturbance of the existing settlement. In the rear of such a policy lay confusion, insurrection, and bloodshed. The first act of the Commons was to demand a promise, that the attainders should be maintained, and they withheld the full supplies till it was given. A dangerous Jacobite spirit had begun to show itself in Trinity College. Edward Forbes, one of the fellows, 'had aspersed the memory of King William.' The provost and the rest of the society had expelled him; and the Lower House, in words which were taken by the High Churchmen as a declaration of war, petitioned the Queen to grant 5000*l.* to the College for a library, as a reward for the provost's zeal, and 'the encouragement of good literature, and sound Revolution principles.'<sup>1</sup>

In this humour the rejected Penal Bill of the previous session came again before them. It was received in a spirit which showed the bishops that, if they meddled further with it, they might have to submit to the repeal of the Test as well. It passed both Houses without difficulty, and the code of law which was designed to transfer the entire soil of Ireland to members of the established Church, and reduce the Catholics to landless dependents, was finally completed. The habit, so long indulged, of treating Irish penal laws as only made to be disobeyed, had tempted the Catholic gentlemen too far. Had they been

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals.* Session 1709.

contented to work quietly below the surface, they might have undermined the first Act till all its purpose had been eaten out. But they had danced upon it, and defied it, and laughed it to scorn, and they had brought their fate upon their own head.

By the new Act, every settlement, every lease on lives, every conveyance made by a Catholic owner since 1704, by which any Protestant or Protestants had been injured, was declared void, and the loopholes were closed by which the Act of that year had been evaded. To defeat Protestant heirs, Catholics had concealed the true value of their property. Children were now enabled to compel their fathers to produce their title-deeds, and make a clear confession. Catholic gentlemen had pretended conversion to qualify themselves for being magistrates and sheriffs, for being admitted to the bar, or for holding a seat in Parliament, while their children were being bred up secretly in the old faith. The education of their families was made a test of sincerity, and those whose sons were not brought up as Churchmen remained under the disabilities.

Nor, if words could hinder it, were the acts directed against the priests to be any more trifled with. Fifty pounds reward was now offered for the conviction of any Catholic archbishop, bishop, or vicar-general; twenty pounds reward for the conviction of friar, Jesuit, or unregistered parish priest. To keep up the supply of priests, and to enable a priest newly made to swear that he did not know by whom he had

been ordained, large numbers of the Catholic clergy had been in the habit of meeting at stations or funerals, with a bishop in the middle of them undistinguished by dress or ornament; and they had held ordinations 'by laying on many hands together, that the party receiving the orders might not know in whom the power was lodged.' It was now made penal for a priest to officiate anywhere except in the parish church for which he was registered, and the last rivet was driven into the chain by the compulsory imposition of the Abjuration Oath, which every priest was made to swear at his registration. As if this was not enough, any two magistrates received power to summon any or every Irish subject above the age of sixteen, to offer him the oath, and to commit him to prison if he refused it.<sup>1</sup> They might also, if he was a Catholic, ask him where he last heard mass, and by whom it was celebrated. If the priest officiating was found to have been unregistered he was liable to be transported.

Once more, for the more effective detection of illegal trusts, leases, mortgages, or conveyances by which Catholics might still endeavour to defeat the object of the statute, a fatal clause was added, that any Protestant whatever who discovered and was

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<sup>1</sup> The Abjuration Oath, as modified by the 22nd of the 1st of Anne, contained nothing which could have tried in any way a loyal Catholic's conscience. It contained simply an admission that Queen Anne was lawful sovereign; and that the Pretender had no right or

title to the Crown. The oath was to be faithful to the Queen, and to defend her, and defend the succession as determined by Parliament in the Protestant line against the Pretender and every other person. To refuse it was, therefore, a confession of disloyalty.



able to prove before a Protestant jury, the existence of any purchase or lease of which a Catholic was to have secretly the advantage, should himself be put in possession of the property which was the subject of the fraud.<sup>1</sup>

The evasion of a law so contrived that every unscrupulous scoundrel in Ireland was its self-constituted guardian became almost impossible. Of the operations of the Act, now at last made really effective, I shall speak in detail in a future chapter. That it was unjust in itself, never occurred as a passing emotion to any Protestant in the two kingdoms, not even to Swift, who speaks approvingly of what he deemed must be the inevitable result. That neither this nor any other penal legislation would of itself give peace to Ireland, that it would not even repress the religion at which it was aimed, unless Protestantism could assume a nobler aspect, and gird itself to nobler work than in its present distracted and divided condition was likely or possible, no one saw more clearly than Lord Wharton; no one endeavoured more honourably to enforce that much-needed and ever-neglected lesson on the obstinate and bewildered Parliament.

‘My lords and gentlemen,’ he said, in closing the session, ‘I need not put you in mind that the good laws we have passed will be of little advantage to you unless life be given to them by a just and impartial execution. That will now depend upon yourselves . . . and I make no question you understand

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Statutes* : 8 Anne, cap. 3.

too well the true interest of the Protestant religion in this kingdom, not to endeavour to make all such Protestants as easy as you can who are willing to defend the whole against the common enemy. . . . It is not the law now passed, nor any law that the will of man can frame, will secure you against Popery, while you continue divided amongst yourselves. Unless there be a firm friendship and confidence among the Protestants of this kingdom, it is impossible for you either to be happy or safe ; and I am directed to declare to you, as her majesty's fixed resolution, that as her majesty will always maintain the Church as by law established, so it is her royal will and intention that the Dissenters shall not be persecuted or molested in the exercise of their religion.'<sup>1</sup>

The words were as if spoken to the wind. The passions of Irish Churchmen were as the passions of Swift. The Dissenters were not relieved of the undeserved note of ignominy which had been stamped on them. The bishops and their officials continued to harass them so far as their power extended ; and the Presbyterian emigration to New England continued also, and gathered volume, to assist, as Hely Hutchinson foretold, in dismembering the British Empire. The Popery Act, meanwhile, was both operative and inoperative ; operative so far as it now at last compelled Catholic land and leaseholders to affect an insincere conversion to escape the eyes of informers ; inoperative so far as the Catholic religion itself remained vigorous

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, August 30, 1709.

as ever, gathering strength from the cowardice which shrunk from acting upon its own laws. The Catholics may feel legitimate pride in the triumph of their principles over unsuccessful violence. There is no disgrace like the disgrace of a religious persecution which has failed in its object. Yet the means to which the best of them condescended to escape the penalties of an intolerant legislation furnish some justification also of the desire to extinguish a creed of subtlety and artifice.

The Abjuration Oath had been imposed at length reluctantly in consequence of the last attempt of the Pretender. The form had been purged of every expression which could offend the conscience of a loyal Catholic. The Pope was not named, and, except so far as he assumed a right to decide between rival claimants to the British throne, a right which no government can be required to acknowledge, his prerogative was not touched upon. The Catholic to whom the oath was an offence, declared in his objection that he regarded the Pretender as his lawful sovereign. But, since laymen were no longer exempt, and the parish priests must take the oath as it now stood, or lose their licences and be transported, perjury under the peculiar circumstances of the case was made a venial sin, and a system was introduced in harmony with those features of the Catholic organization which Protestantism most dreaded and most denounced; by which an oath could be taken dishonestly, and the falsehood be covered by absolution. Forswearing was

not encouraged or distinctly allowed. It was still treated as an offence which required penitential expiation, and the power of pardoning it was reserved to particular persons. Yet in that expiation, when it was made, there was not included the only step which would have given it real value, the public retractation which would have taken away from the sinner the advantage which he had gained by his guilt.

The following letter from a vicar-general to the parish priest of Ballinrobe needs no explanation :—

‘ Reverend sir,—You know the abjuration, as public and scandalous perjury, was hitherto reserved specially, and shall be still in this our district, save the few that we design shall act for us, and by our own power, which we cannot subdelegate. Wherefore, if any abjurers within this our district should pretend to have been hitherto absolved, you must know by whom, that such may be punished and made sensible of their errors and ignorance, and those so unlawfully absolved must be again absolved by you as one now authorized, upon the following conditions and terms: First, that each of them shall sign and acknowledge the annexed declaration,<sup>1</sup> which you must be sure to keep private, for we do not design to expose anybody but as little as we can. In the second place, they must oblige themselves henceforth never to pretend to defend or command the taking of said oath to anybody, but rather, as far as shall lay in them, censure it as the

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<sup>1</sup> Not preserved.

Church does, and as it deserves. Thirdly, that each of them shall, without delay, cause the holy sacrifice of the mass to be at least once offered for them, and perform what pilgrimages, fasts, alms, and praying, you shall think fit to impose, according to the condition and constitution of each person, and finally that, for the future, they protest against this and any  
 1710 other such oaths censured by their pastors and Church. Upon performing and engaging to perform all which, you will admit as many as shall come to you to the holy sacrament of penance and the rest; but not otherwise.

‘I rest, sir, your brother and servant,

‘DOM DEANE.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Instructions for absolving those that have taken the Oath of Abjuration, and the power of ab-  
 solving committed to a few.’ *MSS.*  
 Dublin Castle, 1709-10.

## SECTION VI.

IF Doddington was right in 1703, when he accused two-thirds of the House of Commons of being High Flyers, the half-dozen following years worked the conversion of a great many of them. The Peers, lay and spiritual, continued malignant; the Commons, though ill inclined to Presbyterianism, were increasingly eager to vindicate their Protestantism. They had petitioned the Queen to reward the provost and fellows of Trinity for their stout adherence to 'Revolution principles.' King William was become the national hero of the country gentlemen and city tradesmen and merchants. On the 4th November, the Viceroy, Chancellor, and Judges, the Mayor and Aldermen of Dublin, walked in procession round the statue in College Green. The glorious memory of the immortal deliverer from Tyrconnell, Popery, and confiscation, became the toast at public dinners—the criterion to discover the temper of doubtful dispositions—a counter test, as hard for the High Churchmen to swallow as the Dissenters found the sacrament. The bishops struggled ingeniously, after their methods, to resist the imposition of it. The Bishop of Raphoe and his clergy allowed the Queen no rival in their affections, alive or dead. The Bishop of Cork announced in a sermon, that, to drink to the memory of King William, was a blasphemous parody

of the words used at the consecration of the sacramental cup. Another high dignitary discovered that it was dangerously like prayers for the dead. In Trinity College, among the younger students, the display of loyalty to the Protestant champion provoked hostile demonstrations extremely curious. The expelled Edward Forbes was the leader of a party whom his expulsion had neither terrified nor silenced. He himself followed his 'aspersion of King William' by a book directly in favour of the Pretender. The lads at their supper parties, instead of the 'Glorious immortal memory!' drank to James the Third under the disguise of the 'Three B.'s,<sup>1</sup> 'the Man that's far away,' or 'the King before George.' There was something, perhaps, of Irish contradictoriness about all this. Young Ireland considered that it had a right to choose its own sovereign. Scotland, before the union was decided, had at one time threatened to reject the Hanover succession. Ireland thought she had an equal right to vindicate her liberty, since the union for which she had asked had been refused. On the night of the 4th November the students' chambers were dark; on the night of the birthday of Ormond, whose treason was divined instinctively, every window was illuminated. 'The King shall enjoy his own again,' was roared from a hundred throats; and curses and execrations were yelled at the name of Marlborough. By the side of the political Toryism there was a no less singular religious reaction. Serious students,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Best Born Briton.'

preparing to be clergymen, were heard maintaining 'that the orders of the Church of Rome were as pure and holy as those of the Church of England;' 'that it would be better to be ordained by the Pope than by any English bishop;' that the Revolution had been a rebellion; that King William had been an encourager of Presbyterians and Dutch rogues; and that the nation was governed by Turks.<sup>1</sup>

These humours assumed at last a practical form. On the morning of the 26th June, 1710, all Dublin was agitated by the discovery, that the truncheon had been stolen from King William's statue, and the face plastered with mud. The opportunity had been taken when Parliament, which had been sitting since May, had adjourned for six weeks. Protestant feeling was so grossly outraged, that even the Lords, who were still in Dublin, were obliged to affect indignation. They met and offered 100*l.* reward for the discovery of the offenders, and they declared in their Proclamation, 'that the persons concerned in that barbarous fact, had been guilty of the greatest insolence, baseness, and ingratitude.'<sup>2</sup> The guilty parties proved to be three college students. They excused themselves on the plea of boyish frolic. The explanation was accepted, and no serious punishment was thought necessary. But when the Commons reassembled in August, they expressed the most vehement indignation at an

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<sup>1</sup> 'Enquiry into the State of Trinity College, forwarded by Secretary Budgell to Addison, May 30, 1715.' *MSS.* Record Office.  
<sup>2</sup> 'Wharton to Sunderland, June 27, 1710.' *Ibid.*



act which they interpreted as a direct manifestation of Jacobitism, and they thanked Wharton for his exertion in identifying 'the insolent miscreants' who had been concerned in it.<sup>1</sup>

On all sides the temper was growing sore. The bishops, exasperated at Wharton's intimation that they would not be allowed to meddle with the Dissenters, seized the first opportunity that offered to measure strength with him on a point where they felt confident of support. The Regium Donum had been restored, and there was a tacit understanding that, so long as they kept within the limits which they already occupied, and did not endeavour to extend themselves, the Presbyterian Congregations should not be interfered with.

The pluralism, gross and flagrant, of the Established Church, left many districts entirely without spiritual care. Some of these neglected places had applied to the Presbyterian synod to send them ministers, and the synod had complied. Much ill-feeling had ensued. At last, Presbyterians had ventured to preach to large bodies of people at Drogheda, a place where there was no such excuse, and the bishops resolved to make an example of them.

The congregation, described, with unapostolic scorn, as consisting of 'base persons, coopers, shoemakers, and tailors,' were threatened with the stocks. The ministers were arrested, carried before the mayor, and bound over to take their trial at the Assizes. They

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, 1710.

appealed to the Viceroy, and Wharton ordered the prosecution to be dropped.<sup>1</sup>

The House of Lords was now dragged into the quarrel. The bishops, supported by the lay peers, whom they moved like pawns on a chess-board, complained to the Queen. The Presbyterians, they said, in the language which Swift had put into their mouths, were the cause of all the disorders in Ireland, and the Earl of Wharton was standing by them and encouraging them. The synod defended themselves stoutly. They protested that they had created no disturbance. To settle ministers in places where there was no clergyman, and to convert Catholics to Protestantism, was not a crime. They bore no enmity to the Church. They were willing to work side by side with the Church against the common enemy. They charged the bishops 'with having placed an odious mark of infamy upon at least half the Protestants in Ireland.'<sup>2</sup>

The answer of the English Cabinet was Wharton's recall. It was the moment of the great crisis of Queen Anne's reign and the change of ministry. Godolphin and Sunderland were driven from office, and the Whig Viceroy fell with his friends. St. John came into power, supported, through some strange freak of popular feeling in England, by a majority in the House of Commons. All the subtlety of his genius was directed to the disappointment of the

<sup>1</sup> The story is told at length in *Church MSS.* in Dublin Castle.  
<sup>2</sup> *MSS.* Record Office, Ireland  
 1710.

Hanover succession ; and the government of Ireland was made over once more to Ormond, the idol and 'hope of High Churchmen and the Jacobite traitors.

The gulf already opened between the High Flyers and the Protestant conformists became at once wider than ever. As the peers and prelates showed their colours more distinctly, the country gentlemen grew more passionately Hanoverian. Five-sixths of them now were, or thought themselves, Whigs.<sup>1</sup> They saw before them the spectre of a new revolution. They determined to stand by one another ; to watch the Government every moment ; and if Ormond, like Tyrconnell, attempted changes in the shrievalties and the magistracy, to thwart them with all their force. In the army there was the same feeling. Great as was Ormond's popularity among the soldiers, Marlborough's was greater. The officers of a regiment at Limerick drank 'Confusion, damnation, plague, pestilence, and famine to all archbishops, bishops, and priests.' One midnight they brought out their hounds, twenty couple of them, led a fox round and round the bishop's palace, laid the dogs on the scent, and with the baying pack,

<sup>1</sup> ' Whiggism is what five parts out of six are at present infected withal, or seem to be so in their common conversation. They toss the Government as they would a tennis ball ; talk of the Queen and her new ministry at such a rate as any modest man would be ashamed to repeat. They have so many hundred thousand Whigs in this country that won't be run down. If my Lord of Ormond comes to the government, he will never be able to do what he proposes to himself, nor what will be expected of him.' — 'Maurice Hussey to Secretary Dawson, October 1710. MSS. Dublin Castle.

and whoops and shouts, and winding horns, startled the slumbers of the episcopal family.<sup>1</sup>

The bishops, on the other hand, were in high spirits from an evident proof of the favour felt towards them in London. Ormond arrived the following midsummer, bringing with him, as the result of Swift's negotiations, the remission of firstfruits to the clergy of the Establishment; and Ormond met Parliament in July with the joyful announcement of the Queen's liberality. Like Bolingbroke in England, he concealed the plans of his party behind elaborate promises to support Protestantism and the Hanoverian dynasty; and he informed the Commons also, with marked emphasis, that the Queen had acceded to their request, and had granted the 5000*l.* to Trinity College as a reward for their Protestant zeal.

At first the signs were favourable for a short and smooth session. The country gentlemen—it speaks well for their as yet simple and uncorrupted habits<sup>2</sup>—were anxious to be at their homes for the harvest, and so inclined to get through their work rapidly. 1711

Anticipating trouble, the Government had probably deferred the opening of the session to a moment when they knew that the members would be impatient of a

<sup>1</sup> 'William Parker to Secretary Dawson, October 27.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> 'Living men can remember when we were as remarkable for our sobriety as we are now for rioting and drunkenness; when

our ancestors of the best families had their wine brought in dozens, and sack and spirits were sold at apothecaries' shops as cordials for the sick.'—*Reflexions and Resolutions proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland.* Dublin, 1738.

long stay in Dublin.<sup>1</sup> The elements of discord, however, were too many and too various, and the prospect rapidly clouded. The grant to the College, with the reasons alleged for it by the Commons, the encouragement of '*Revolution principles*,' was a morsel too hard for Jacobite digestion. Jealous for the Queen's honour, the Lords inserted a paragraph in the address, 'that her majesty had extended her favour to the College at Dublin at such a juncture as must testify to the world, that what her majesty bestowed was not given to promote those principles, upon which it was first applied for, but to encourage university education, the neglect of which had been the means of the growth of ignorance, profaneness, and infidelity, and the loose and wild notions and tenets which had industriously been spread abroad.'<sup>2</sup>

The Commons, deeply sharing the feelings with which the whole country had been agitated, looked on these words of the Lords as the first step of an aggressive campaign. Snatching at the glove that was thrown to them, they voted by a large majority, that the Lords had highly infringed their rights, privileges, and liberties; had misrepresented her majesty's goodness; and had insinuated, to the dishonour of their House, that the principles upon which the application was made were such as her majesty disapproved. The

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sir Edward Southwell to Lord Dartmouth, July 13.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> *Commons' Journals*, August 4, 1711. *Lords' Journals*, July 17. 'Southwell to the Earl of Dartmouth, July 20.' *MSS.* Record Office.

Lords pretended that, by Revolution principles, the Commons had not meant the revolution under William, but had desired to justify rebellion and anarchy. This charge, the Commons said, was false, scandalous, and malicious; highly and unjustly reflecting on their loyalty and honour. They drew a fresh address of their own, protesting 'that the principles on which they had applied for her majesty's bounty to the College, were such as they could never be ashamed to own, being no other than those to which they owed the preservation of their religion, their liberties, and properties.'<sup>1</sup>

In a House of which more than half the members were nominees of the noble families and great land-owners, the passion must have gone deep before it could have assumed a form so violent. The Lords replied undauntedly with a double shot.

The first was an attack on the Dissenters, whose interests they conceived that, in some way or other, their antagonists designed to further. Possessed with an extraordinary obliquity of vision, which inverted the position of persecutors and persecuted, thirteen bishops and eleven lay peers appealed to the Queen against the Presbyterians as savages who denied to their conforming brethren the common offices of humanity. They demanded protection from the rage and obstinacy which threatened the destruction of the Church. They complained that the miserable 1200*l.* a

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, August 8. Cf. 'Southwell's correspondence with Lord Dartmouth, August 1711.' *MSS.* Record Office.

year was applied to the propagation of schism and the disturbance of the peace of the realm, and they required that the grant should be withdrawn. St. John,<sup>1</sup> already meditating the Schism Act, was but too willing to advise compliance. For the remainder of the reign the Regium Donum was unpaid.

To the accusation of the Commons the Lords rejoined in language as haughty as their own. The Commons had charged them with 'malice and untruth.' They charged the Commons with having assailed them in language more opprobrious than had been used by another House in another place, when 'it voted the House of Lords useless.' Whatever cause her majesty might have had to approve the conduct of the College, they humbly conceived she could not mean to encourage the principles of Revolution—principles they said, sufficiently explained by a sermon preached on 30th of January, and dedicated to the Lower House, 'in great measure maintaining and justifying the execrable murder of her royal grandfather, King Charles the First.'<sup>2</sup>

Harvest had come and gone. Determined to fight out the quarrel, the Commons had been contented with a short recess. On the re-assembling, the battle raged furiously as ever. In an address to the Lord Lieutenant, they re-affirmed with emphasis 'their steady adherence to the principles of the late Revolution.' The

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<sup>1</sup> REID'S *History of the Presbyterians in Ireland*, vol. iii. p. 16. | A copy of the address is in the Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> *Lords' Journals*, November.

Jacobite members moved to omit words so provocative, but were defeated on a division; and, the day after, anticipating a counter blow, they carried a vote, 'that whoever, by speaking, writing, or printing, should arraign or condemn the principles of the Revolution of 1688, was an enemy to their own House, to the Constitution in Church and State, and to the Hanover succession, and was a friend of the Pretender.'<sup>1</sup> With this characteristic resolution ended the last session of a House of Commons which had been coeval with the reign; which had passed the Acts for the repression of Popery, and, though too late penitent, the Test clause, and was now perishing in defence of the same principles of liberty which flung Romanism into chains while it was dangerous, and struck them off when its power to hurt had disappeared.

Finding it impossible to proceed with such a House in a policy which was to qualify Ireland to receive the Pretender, Ormond got rid of it. The Parliament was prorogued and never met again. When the constituencies should have been prepared sufficiently, and there was ground for hope of a High Church majority that could be depended on, the unusual experiment was to be tried of a dissolution and a new election. Ormond returned to London to repair to the army in Flanders, and the government was left to the Chancellor, Sir Constantine Phipps, a friend of Swift and an English Tory.

Convocation, meanwhile, which was still allowed to

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, November 8, 1711.



sit, kept the fire burning, and continued to inflame the Queen against the unhappy Dissenters whom, in the next Parliament, they hoped to annihilate. In a highly curious address the bishops lamented over the growth in Ireland of impiety and atheism, due in reality to the school of Toland, and Tindal, and Asgill, but which it pleased the clergy to attribute 'to the sectaries who came over in the time of the wicked and detestable usurper, Oliver Cromwell, and had spread the enthusiasm which, under a specious pretence of sanctity, was ever accompanied with sedition.' Both Government and Church, they said, had erred in being over-lenient. Concession had invited encroachment, and but for the late happy change in government, brought about by the providence of God, Episcopacy had been utterly undone.

The form which Providence had assumed was that of Bolingbroke, who believed extremely little in either God or devil. These reverend gentlemen, however, with the extravagant injustice which only religious hatred can inspire, insisted that the Presbyterians would make common cause with deists, socinians, enemies of revealed religion, and even Papists themselves, to dissolve the present form of government. The Low Churchmen and Whigs, they said, were little better. Impiety, profanity, and immorality universally prevailed in the society affected by their influence. 'Wicked and blasphemous healths were used by persons disaffected to the constitution; the prayers in the Litany for deliverance from plague, pestilence, and

famine, were turned into a curse upon bishops, priests, and deacons, and all congregations committed to their charge, who refused to drink to the glorious and immortal memory of the dead.'

The bishops, and only the bishops, supposed that they understood Ireland, and knew how to deal with it. To the Dissenters and the Whigs they added, as a third plague of Ireland, the Papists. 'The Papists,' they said, 'lived continually in hope of aid from the Catholic Powers to root out the Protestants, and shake off the yoke of Britain.' They described them as 'visibly exalted with any ill success to her majesty's arms, and dejected with accounts of victory, their dependence being on France for being restored to their estates.' In noting the causes of the little impression which had yet been made upon the Roman Catholic masses, they pointed, with some sagacity, to 'the unsteadiness of the measures which had been used towards those of that persuasion; sometimes measures of great severity, and then again indulgence and toleration, the laws made against them being rarely executed, and they in consequence, when in greatest difficulties, hoping for a return of connivance.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Address of Convocation to the Crown, 1712.' MSS. Record Office, Ireland.

## SECTION VII.

MEANWHILE a second feud had broken out, violent as the quarrel of Lords and Commons, between the Government and the city of Dublin. To secure  
 1712 a Tory House of Commons, the first step was to appoint Tory sheriffs in the counties, and Tory mayors in the towns. The Dublin corporation set an example of resistance, and from the certainty that, if successful, the precedent would be followed elsewhere, the whole powers of the Castle were exerted to bend or break them. The usual practice had been for the aldermen to elect freely such members of their body as the majority preferred. An obsolete claim was revived by the Government to nominate a select number of candidates, between whom the choice was to lie. Both sides were obstinate. The city elected a Whig mayor, whom the Government refused to recognize. The Catholic mob were for the Castle; the well-to-do citizens and free men were to a man for the corporation; and, for two years, Dublin was without a municipal government. The sheriff slipped away to England to avoid compromising himself with either party, and courts could not be held for want of jurors, and justice was in abeyance through the suspension of all lawful authority.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An enormous mass of papers connected with this strange business are in Dublin Castle. Compare Shrewsbury to Bolingbroke, February 2 and March 19, 1714. *MSS. Ireland.* Record Office.

Ormond's continued presence being needed in London, the Duke of Shrewsbury took his place as Viceroy. The English constituencies had returned a large Tory majority. Queen Anne had by this time probably come to a resolution to support the Pretender's claims to the succession. Bolingbroke was growing confident of success; and Shrewsbury, more uncertain of his own intentions than Bolingbroke probably supposed, was sent over to make sure of Ireland. Rumour, busy with his name before his arrival, announced that he had been received into the Church of Rome, that the duchess was a professed Catholic, that a chapel was being fitted up for them in the Castle. To the surprise of everyone he allowed favourites of Lord Wharton to remain in offices about his own person, and, more remarkably, immediately after his arrival, he agitated the Tory party by a signal celebration of King William's birthday.<sup>1</sup> This, however, might be only part of a game which Bolingbroke had instructed him to play. The important matters were the Parliament, and an empty treasury; and the bishops' projects against the Dissenters made it necessary to proceed to an election. It was felt to be dangerous. If the new House proved like the last, the Ministers seem to have resolved to make an end of the Irish Constitution.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Long History of a Short Session of a Certain Parliament.*

<sup>2</sup> Swift, who was in England, and in close communication with Bolingbroke, sent a significant warning to Archbishop King:—'If your House of Commons,' he said,

'should run into any violence disagreeable to us here, it will be of the worst consequence imaginable to that kingdom; for I know no maxim more strongly maintained at present in our court than that her majesty ought to exert her

But the Tories expected a majority. 'They had the Council with them,' they said, 'and the House of Lords with them;' thus supported, 'they had the House of Commons in their pocket,' and any one who cautioned them was 'upbraided with the odious name of Whig.'<sup>1</sup> The Chancellor, when the elections were in progress, reported the success as beyond expectation. He was specially delighted with 'the good spirit of loyalty in the mob;' and assured Swift that, 'by the nicest calculations, the Castle would have a majority of three to two.'<sup>2</sup>

Sir Constantine's 'mob' specially distinguished themselves in Dublin. He had been advised to end the mayoralty quarrel before the election. Possibly he

power to the utmost upon any uneasiness given on your side to herself or her servants. Neither can I answer that even the legislative powers here may not take cognizance of anything that may pass among you in opposition to the persons and principles that are now favoured by the Queen.'—'Swift to Abp. King, October 20, 1713.' *Swift's Works*, vol. xvi. It appears from an unpublished letter of an Irish judge (Mr. Justice Nutley), that Swift might at this time have exchanged St. Patrick's, to which he had just been promoted, for an Irish bishopric. 'His Grace the Primate' (Narcissus Marsh), writes Sir R. Nutley, 'died on the second instant at two in the morning. I am of opinion that the deanery of St. Patrick's is a fine preferment

for a lord lieutenant's chaplain to jump into after one or two months' service; and if you can be tempted to part with your fine house in Dublin for an ill-contrived one on a country bishopric, I can easily cut out a scheme for advancing some eminent, worthy, active prelate to the primacy, and so three good persons may be promoted at once.'—'Sir R. Nutley to Swift, November 5, 1713.' *MSS.* Record Office. The chaplain, Dr. Godwyn, was made bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh immediately after. The Queen's objections to the *Tale of a Tub* were as usual fatal to Swift.

<sup>1</sup> Letters signed with a cypher to Swift, December 1713. *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sir Constantine Phipps to Dean Swift, November 9, 1713.'

preferred to keep the fire smouldering, that it might be the easier blown into flame. Any way there was an Irish row of a genuine kind. The house of the Archbishop of Tuam, one of the few Liberals on the bench, was attacked. A watchman on duty there was knocked down, and, but for a reinforcement of police, the Archbishop himself would have been dragged into the street 'for a Whig.'<sup>1</sup> The election going <sup>1713</sup> in favour of the Opposition, young Cotter, Sir James Cotter's eldest son,<sup>2</sup> led an attack on the Protestant voters as they were going to the poll. One man was killed; many were injured. The Castle guard turned out to disperse the rioters; but they were recalled by an instant order within the gates, and the too officious officers on duty were put under arrest. In the midst of wild uproar the Castle candidates were declared elected, and the Chancellor and the Council flattered themselves, that, by the free use of such means, 'they had secured such a House of Commons as was never known in Ireland.'<sup>3</sup> They discovered that they had made a serious mistake.

The first intimation of the truth was in the choice of a speaker. Sir Richard Levinge, the Castle candi-

<sup>1</sup> 'The pretence, as well as the thing, was somewhat extraordinary,' wrote the Bishop of Kildare, in describing the scene to Swift, October 20, 1713. *MSS. Record Office.*

<sup>2</sup> Sir James Cotter had been a distinguished supporter of King James. His son, on his father's death, had been placed by the

Court of Chancery under a Protestant guardian. He had been stolen away, brought up a Catholic in England, and married as a minor to a Catholic lady. The career of this idol of young Catholic Ireland had a wild ending, as will be seen.

<sup>3</sup> *Long History of a Short Session.*

date, was defeated in a close fight by Alan Brodrick. The Liberal majority increased rapidly as the elections were enquired into. The scenes at Dublin had been repeated at half the towns in the provinces, and Tory after Tory was unseated. 'We are threatened now with an unquiet session,' Sir John Stanley wrote to Bolingbroke. The Viceroy began to flatter and pay court to Brodrick to stave off a quarrel. The last hope was to get the money vote passed quietly and end the session. But no such fortune was possible.

The Nonconformists, on Shrewsbury's arrival, had presented him with an address for the removal of the Test, intimating that, if their petition were refused, large numbers of them intended to emigrate to New England. Shrewsbury gave an icy answer; and in his speech to Parliament he said, that it was rather the Established Church which required laws for its better security. The Lords announced, in words supplied them by the bishops, 'that Ireland would be happy if she could be saved from Popish priests and Dissenting preachers.' The Viceroy replied, 'that the Church should be supported against the designs of Papists and the encroachments of any whatsoever.' The Lower House, plunging at once into the conflict, and touching lightly on the Church, reinsisted on the obnoxious word *Revolution*. They complimented Shrewsbury, perhaps ironically, on the part which he had himself taken in 1688;<sup>1</sup> and proceeded to denounce, and even threaten

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<sup>1</sup> 'To complete your Grace's | eminent manner, been instrumental character, you have also, in a most | in bringing about the glorious Re-

to impeach, Sir Constantine Phipps for his interference in the election to the Dublin mayoralty. They voted that he had been the principal cause of the disorders and divisions of the realm; that he was working in secret in the interests of the Pretender; and they petitioned the Queen to remove him from office.

An untoward accident blew the fire into a flame. The two Houses of Convocation, having drawn an address of their own, had an audience in the presence chamber to present it to the Viceroy. Robert Molesworth, Lord Molesworth afterwards, the member for Swords and a privy councillor, said in a whisper which was audible over the room :

‘ They that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.’

Molesworth had long been noted as dangerous. He had been a friend of Asgill. He was suspected of intimacy with Toland. His opinions on religious matters were probably no worse than Bolingbroke’s. But Bolingbroke’s sins were mantled with the political robes of Toryism. Molesworth was a Whig and a Hanoverian.

The clergy started as if stung by a snake. Church and State, God and man, they said, were insulted by such monstrous wickedness. Holy Scripture had been profaned and the Queen outraged in the person of the Viceroy, who was present when such shocking

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volution in 1688, to which, under | ties.’—‘Address of the Commons,  
God, we owe the preservation of | November 30, 1713.’ *Commons’*  
our religious liberties and proper- | *Journals.*



words were spoken. They laid their wrongs before the House of Lords. The Lords demanded a conference with the Commons. The whole Parliament, they said, must combine 'to do justice to that venerable body the Convocation,' and make the guilty person 'sensible of the horrid crime laid to his charge, of impiously profaning the lively oracles of God.'<sup>1</sup> Molesworth's name was struck from the list of Privy Councillors. The Lords required the Commons to show the same zeal which they had shown when they removed Asgill, and expel him from their House.

The Commons passed to the order of the day. They concerned themselves little with the wrongs of the clergy. They desired only to secure themselves and the country against the treachery of the secret friends of the Pretender. A rumour spread that he was coming to Ireland: they brought in heads of a bill offering a reward for his capture alive or dead. Edward Forbes, the ex-fellow of Trinity College, had published a book advocating his claims. An indictment was drawn against him. He fled to England, and threw himself on Ormond's protection, and Phipps quashed the prosecution. A prologue had been spoken in the theatre on the Queen's birthday, which, from the high laudation of the 'immortal memory of William,' had been construed into an affront to the reigning sovereign, and the orator had been arrested by Phipps' order. Not wishing to be accused of faction, the Commons did not choose to refuse the supplies, but

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, December 22, 1713.

they made a statement of grievances a condition of their grant; and, when the Speaker presented the money bill in one hand, in the other he presented a list of complaints. The Commons again insisted that the Chancellor should be dismissed 'for the peace and safety of the Protestant inhabitants of the kingdom.' 'Distinctions of parties had been fostered' at a time when 'unanimity among Protestants' was more than ever necessary. 'Her majesty's loyal subjects had been traduced as enemies to her person and government,' 'exposed to the insults of Papists, and the vilest part of the people.' The persons who had been instrumental in these misrepresentations, 'they could not but suspect to have views directly opposite to her majesty's service and good of the kingdom.'

Shrewsbury refused a money bill so accompanied. He sent for the Opposition leaders. He told them that 'the Queen was dissatisfied with their heats.' He enquired whether, if they were allowed to continue to sit, 'they would drop the matter against the Chancellor.'<sup>1</sup> They would not listen to him. They threatened to send a Committee to London to lay their grievances before the throne, and the Viceroy found himself compelled to dispense with the supplies, and to prorogue the Parliament till the following autumn. The expenses of the Government were reduced on all sides, to be brought, if possible, within the limits of the hereditary revenue; and Bolingbroke

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<sup>1</sup> 'Shrewsbury to Bolingbroke, January 5, 1714.' *MSS.* Record Office.

determined to show Ireland that he intended to be her master, and that if she could not be trusted to legislate for herself, he could legislate for her from London.

So closed the session, which was to have laid Ireland at the feet of ecclesiastical Toryism, and cleared the way for the accession of the Pretender, and the exclusive dominion there of the peers and High Church bishops, who were mad enough to believe that, when the Whigs were put down, and the Presbyterians and French Calvinists driven out of the kingdom, they could themselves hold a monopoly of power, and fashion people and country after their own formulas. Shrewsbury returned to England, leaving the sword in his absence to the detested Phipps and the secretary Sir John Stanley. The army had shown dangerous tendencies; being devoted to Marlborough, and especially indignant at the peace of Utrecht, it was feared that, in case of disturbance, the soldiers might side with the Whigs, and orders were sent to disband the suspected regiments. The order was carried out with difficulty. Ker's dragoons at Cavan and Colonel Pepper's at Athlone refused to part with their arms; five companies of infantry openly mutinied. It was with difficulty that they were persuaded into submission,<sup>1</sup> and the country lay still in sullen calm.

Bolingbroke, meanwhile, was carrying through the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Stanley to Bolingbroke, April 15, 1714. MSS. Record Office.

English Parliament the famous Schism Act.<sup>1</sup> By a singular combination of accidents Queen Anne's last ministry proved able for a time practically to repeal the Toleration Act; and to prohibit Dissenters, under severe penalties, from teaching their own opinions to high or low, in school or college. Political liberty, as Bolingbroke well understood, had its root in liberty of religion. With religion once safely encircled with an iron ring of Prayer-Book and Articles, the revolutionary spirit would be broken; and, under the supremacy of a Church, where zeal was impossible and enthusiasm was suffocated in formulas, intelligent statesmen could resume a control, with which Protestantism, while it continued alive, was for ever interfering. He carried his bill through the Parliament at Westminster. He had intended, doubtless, that a willing House of Commons should pass a similar bill for him in Dublin. As Ireland was mutinous, he proposed to teach her that her constitution existed on sufferance, and that the desired work could equally well be accomplished by a clause attached to the English Act. Bolingbroke himself rose in the House of Lords, and moved that the provisions of the law should be extended to Ireland.

Shrewsbury, himself fresh from a conflict which had taught him better to appreciate the relative value of Irish parties, tried to stop him; but the

1714

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<sup>1</sup> 'Act to prevent the growth of Schism, and for the further Security of the Churches of England and Ireland as by law established.' 12 Anne, cap. 7. *English Statutes.*

Church bigots, led blindly by a chief who in his heart despised them more heartily than the most contemptuous of Whigs, clamoured down opposition. The motion was carried, thirty-three liberal peers, among whom to their honour were four bishops,<sup>1</sup> leaving on record their ineffectual protest.<sup>2</sup> But the castle in the air was no sooner finished than the foundation sunk, and the ambitious superstructure fell to ruins. On the 1st of August, 1714, the day on which the Schism Bill was to come into operation, the Queen died; and the Tory ascendancy, on which the liberties of England and Ireland had so narrowly escaped shipwreck, was over. In a few weeks another Parliament met: Oxford went to the Tower, and Bolingbroke and Ormond were attainted fugitives. The House of Hanover was established on the throne, and the political supremacy of

<sup>1</sup> Ely, St. Asaph, Bangor, and Llandaff.

<sup>2</sup> The miseries we apprehend here are greatly enhanced by extending this bill to Ireland, where the consequences of it may be fatal. For since the number of Papists in that kingdom far exceeds the Protestants of all denominations together, and that the Dissenters are to be treated as enemies, or at least as persons dangerous to that Church and State, who have always in all times joined, and still would join, with the members of that Church against the common enemy of their religion; and since the army there is very much reduced; the Protestants thus unnecessarily divided seem to be exposed to the

danger of another massacre, and the Protestant religion in danger of being extirpated. We may fear the Scots in Britain, whose national church is Presbyterian, will not so heartily join with us in our defence when they see those of the same nation, same blood, and same religion, so hardly treated by us. And this will be still more grievous to the Protestant Dissenters of Ireland, because, while the Popish priests are registered, and so indulged by law as they exercise their religion without molestation, the Dissenters are so far from enjoying the like toleration, that the laws are by this bill enforced against them.' — *Parliamentary History*, vol. vi. pp. 135, 136.

the bishops of the Church of Ireland was at an end for ever.

Yet the baneful influence of principles, the absurdity of which is now so patent to the simplest student of the Irish problem, survived for two generations to work disaster and confusion, and to paralyze the sinews of Protestantism. Jealousy of the Presbyterians rankled still in the most powerful intellects which the Church of Ireland produced. It made useless to the true interests of his country the gigantic understanding of Swift. It led Berkeley into the same theories of passive obedience, which had crippled the resistance to Tyrconnell; had perplexed and irritated William; had divided those who, united, might have prevented the second civil war, and might have made unnecessary the second series of confiscations. Worse than all, it perpetuated the disunion of the two great branches of the Protestant colonists, who, if the Reformation was a lawful revolt against unjust authority, were in essentials one. It prolonged the disabilities of that section of the Protestants who alone possessed missionary power, whose crime was the ability to make proselytes among the Celtic Catholics. Last of all, in our own days, the spent force of the division of the Protestant interest in Ireland has shown itself in the disestablishment of the once haughty Church, which, had she taken the Presbyterians within her limits, when they were willing and eager to be her friends, might have defied for another century the malice of her enemies.

## CHAPTER III.

### PROTESTANT ADMINISTRATION.

#### SECTION I.

**T**HE loyalty or the apathy of the Irish Catholics in the rebellions of 1715 and 1745 has been pleaded as an argument to prove the injustice of the penal laws. We are asked to believe, that their devotion to England was proof even against gratuitous cruelty; that twice they let pass an opportunity for achieving their freedom, rather than soil their honour with the taint of rebellion. It is true, and it is the most remarkable fact in Irish history, that Ireland did remain, on these occasions, undisturbed. Even when, later in the century, encouraged by the revolt of the American colonies, the Irish Protestants rose at last and wrenched out of the grasp of the English Parliament the legislative instruments of oppression, by which they had been so long racked and tortured; when the sympathy between the Irish Nonconformists and the American States was so keen that Paul Jones found a welcome in every Irish harbour that was unoccupied by an English squadron; when

English commerce was swept out of St. George's Channel, and the Holyhead passage yachts were searched and plundered by privateers under the American flag, fitted out and manned by Protestant adventurers from Wexford and Dublin, it is true, that the staunchest friends which the English Government possessed in the island were the representatives and great grandfathers of the Catholic Irish peasantry, to whom America is now the land of promise, and whose dream is a liberated Ireland under the protectorate of the Stars and Stripes. In 1760, when Munster was in agrarian revolt, and the French, striking, as they supposed, at a vulnerable point in England's armour, attempted an invasion there, there was little if any correspondence or sympathy between Versailles and the Tipperary Whiteboys. In 1745, Irish Catholic bishops were in communication with the Castle, prepared, should any movement be attempted in favour of the Pretender, to give information of it; but the occasion never arose. The inference, notwithstanding, that a people so well disposed ought to have been trusted and encouraged, may be premature, and even altogether erroneous. The attitude of the Catholic clergy was due to their having learned to look on England as their protector against the Protestant Parliament. The Catholic masses, deprived of political power, had ceased to struggle against their chains. Mutilated and miserable as the penal legislature had been made, immoral in its details, unaccompanied with any one of those remedial measures,



without which coercion becomes tyranny, yet the distinct assertion of authority had produced an impression on the imagination of the people, and in its partial success pointed to the only method by which England and Ireland could really be made one. Among the peculiarities of the Celtic peasantry, one of the most striking is a contempt for those who are afraid of them; a submissiveness and even real attachment, which is proof against much injustice and many cruelties, to a master who is a master indeed. The relations of men to one another become healthy only when the truth is seen and confessed. Elizabeth forbade her viceroys to meddle with religion, and she had to encounter three bloody insurrections. Under Charles the First there was a Catholic majority in the Irish Parliament with the practical enjoyment of civil and religious equality. The reward was the rebellion and massacre of 1641. A third of the confiscated estates was given back to the Catholics at the Restoration. The titular bishops were received at the Castle. Catholic laymen became magistrates, sheriffs, judges, officers in the army. At length they had their own Parliament; and they showed their gratitude for these indulgences by repealing the acts of settlement, and by attainting 3000 Protestant landowners.

Once more they had been made to yield to superior force, and this time the force had not been afraid to assert itself. The beaten party was compelled to know that they had no alternative but to yield, and ninety years followed of undisturbed political tran-

quillity; good-humoured submissiveness in the place of chronic revolt; and, instead of indignation against a tyrannical law, a feeling rather of gratitude for the comparative lenity with which, in general, the law was enforced.

In 1715 the exasperation and bitterness produced by the last war were subsiding, but had not yet disappeared entirely. There were many officers still in Connaught who had fought at Aghrim, and Galway had been lately prepared to receive a French expedition. Tens of thousands of young Irishmen were in the French service, and thousands more were continually recruited under the name of Wild Geese, and shipped off from the secluded bays of Cork and Kerry. They went out as if for ever expatriated, but they intended to return in better days with the French army, which was to give them back their liberties; and had Bolingbroke succeeded in gaining a footing for the Pretender in England, or had Ormond afterwards effected his intended landing at Waterford, it would have been seen that the old party of Tyrconnell and Sarsfield had life enough remaining to strike once more for Irish liberty. On the whole, however, except among the bishops and Anglo-Irish Jacobites, the cause of James the Third created no enthusiasm. The native Catholics had no cause to love the House of Stuart. They had not forgiven the Act of Settlement. They had not forgotten the cowardice and flight of the Pretender's father. Unless they could separate the crowns of the two kingdoms as well as the legislatures,

they had reason to believe that the policy of one English king towards them would not differ very widely from that of any other English king; and, taught by the experience of 1692, they preferred that the battles of Ireland should be fought elsewhere.

‘The Papists,’ said Swift in 1725, and his great authority is echoed by every contemporary document, ‘would doubtless gladly have their superstition restored under any prince whatever, yet the Pretender’s party is at an end. Very few now alive are in his interest. The Papists in general of any substance or estate, and the priests almost universally, are what we call Whigs in the general sense of the term. They feel the smart and see the scars of their former wounds. They well know they must be made a sacrifice to the least attempt towards a change.’<sup>1</sup>

Thus the accession of the House of Hanover passed off as quietly in the wilds of Kerry as in Kent and Sussex. Guns were fired, bonfires lighted, tuns of claret broached and emptied in the streets of every town in the four provinces; and no word of disaffection was heard above a whisper from the Giant’s Causeway to Valentia.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Address of the Drapier to both Houses of Parliament.’—*Swift’s Works*, vol. vii.

## SECTION II.

THE persistent determination to govern under the forms of the constitution, to maintain the exterior show of liberty among a people who could not be trusted with the reality, although under some aspects plausible and honourable, yet prolonged the agony of the Irish nation, and, like all insincerity, created more evils than it cured. The Irish Parliament was to be maintained; but, to prevent the Parliament from being troublesome, it was chained by Poyning's Act; three-quarters of the population were disfranchised; and, when the Parliament was recalcitrant, laws were passed in England over its head. Trial by jury, the most precious birthright of Englishmen, was regarded as the inalienable privilege of every subject of the British Crown, and as such it was maintained in Ireland; but the forms of freedom avail only to those who can make a wholesome use of them. Convictions could not be obtained against Catholic bishops and unregistered priests, and the destruction of the Catholic religion had to be pursued through the circuitous action of a law which undermined the foundations of society. The Acts of Anne for the repression of Popery had been framed to throw into Protestant hands the entire land of Ireland. The opportunities for evasion had been at length closed so carefully that, for a family to preserve their estates who continued to avow

themselves Catholic, had been made really difficult. The object aimed at may have been not in itself unjust; the means by which it was pursued were detestable. A son, who had quarrelled with his father, could demand a maintenance on declaring himself a Protestant, and there was thus a premium on dishonest conversions, and an encouragement to disobedience in children. A Protestant informer, who could convict a Catholic of stealing his property, could dispossess the owner in his own favour. The disabilities extending to leases, to trades, and professions, the temptation to spiritual dishonesty, was carried down among the middlemen, the tenant farmers, the lawyers, and the shopkeepers; and the ranks of the Protestants were swelled by gentlemen and men of business who, in forfeiting their self-respect, lost with it the sense of right and wrong.

The first of the two Acts had been comparatively unsuccessful. The loose wording of the penal clauses had created a belief perhaps that, like so many other laws in Ireland, it had been designed merely as a threat. It had been neutralized by transparent concealments and fictitious conveyances, and in the six years in which it remained unsupplemented, thirty-six Catholics only had conformed. The second Act—the clause especially which enabled any Protestant to make his fortune by a successful information—convinced them that if they would retain their properties they must abandon their creed; and produced in reality or appearance, instant and extensive conversions. Many

Catholics, probably, sold their estates and emigrated to France. Many more preferred their homes under hard conditions to perpetual expatriation ; and, before 1738, a thousand Catholic families of rank and consequence had been received into the Establishment ; some in appearance only ; some in indifference ; some from the common-place belief that truth is on the side of the strong ; some, possibly, but very few, from real conviction. Whatever the motive, the result to the country was the same.

‘The greatest part of the Catholic gentlemen,’ says an Anglo-Irishman of the time, ‘who are either distinguished for understanding or fortune, have actually come over to our Church, and renounced the errors of Rome. If some are not sincere, their children and grandchildren will certainly be so, and it is likely therefore that the people will follow.’ ‘If once,’ this writer continues, and the parallel which he draws must be remembered, since it was the moral justification of these laws in the minds of the persons who passed them — ‘if once the Popish clergy were as effectually removed as the Huguenot ministers are in France, we should soon see our churches filled with converts as much as theirs ; and as they are already sentenced by our laws as civil enemies to our constitution and country, so nothing but the executing of those laws, and providing for the instruction of the Irish, can perfectly heal the wounds and maims of our divided nation. I can by no means think our laws are chargeable with a persecuting spirit in this matter of the Popish clergy ; nor do I think

there is a nation under heaven which would have borne with them so long with such gentleness and lenity under such dreadful provocation ; and their attempting so often, by massacre and rebellion, to overturn our constitution, and make one grave for our laws and people.'<sup>1</sup>

With the accession of the House of Hanover and the failure of the rising in Scotland in 1715, Romanism had become, in fact, in the eyes of the intelligent laity, a lost political cause. From an authoritative creed controlling the actions of states it dwindled into a mode of opinion ; and whatever ground might be found either in France or Spain for future interference in Ireland, the occasion would no longer be religion. The Catholic gentry, so long as they adhered to their creed, were cut off from the public life of the empire, and every motive of interest or ambition tempted them to conformity. In the better cultivated parts of the country, even among the peasantry who had no land to lose, and no career to which to aspire, the feeling for Popery from other causes was for a time rapidly waning. They resented the extortionate payments demanded of them for the support of the priests. The potato, though spreading fast, was still an exceptional article of food before the middle of the last century. They continued to live chiefly upon meat, and, when Lent came with its compulsory fasts, the conscientious among them were in danger of being

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<sup>1</sup> *Reflexions and Resolutions for the Gentlemen of Ireland, 1738.*

starved.<sup>1</sup> On all estates where the Protestant landlords resided, their tenants transferred to them the affectionate fidelity with which they had regarded their hereditary leaders. Far unlike the Presbyterian artisans, they clung to their homes, and were 'averse to American rambles.'<sup>2</sup> 'When the leaven of Popery had not soured their natures, they were faithful and attached servants;' and when opportunities were opened out to them they were 'capable of being made excellent husbandmen, soldiers, sailors, workmen, merchants, and scholars.' 'The earth-tillers,' as they had been contemptuously called in the old days, were in fact showing all the qualities which, when they were kept at work and kindly treated, had always been seen to belong to them. Their superstitions were dying out, and they were 'Papists rather from custom than conviction.' 'The living so long among Protestants had itself introduced a kind of reformation among them.' 'They thought charitably of the salvation of Protestants, more slightly of the Pope's authority, and they read the English translation of the Bible.' They understood and acknowledged that they were suffering the actual consequences of the rebellion and massacre of 1641; 'that their contending for a Popish prince

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<sup>1</sup> 'The observing of Lent is a time that I have heard a good great cause of idleness. It is not only a time of fast, but of famine. The poor Irish are fed on very bad flesh seven-eighths of the year. In Lent they are famished. They are so hunger-starved in this dreadful

time that I have heard a good Catholic wish the priests would allow them to eat the kites and hawks, rooks, crows, and foxes in that season.'—*Reflexions and Resolutions.*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid



and interest in Ireland' was folly; 'and that their zeal that way had been as vain and silly as the old sacrificing their lives in the quarrels between the Kildares and Ormonds.' 'They had obtained juster notions of Irish history.' 'They saw how they had been made the tools of other men's ambition.' 'The affectation of speaking Irish was gone; scarcely one in twenty of them did not understand and speak English well.' 'They were being brought to like and know English customs, manners, and habits;' and such of them as had made money by trade or manufacture, 'were running fast into the neatness and plenty of the English way of living.'<sup>1</sup>

Such is the description of the settled districts in Ireland given by one of the resident Protestant gentry in 1738, indicating a disposition which, had fair play been allowed to the industry of the country, must have soon obliterated the traces of old animosities. Although there were remarkable exceptions, hereafter to be noticed, religious differences were generally losing their bitterness, and even the penal laws themselves were made a means of extending charity and good feeling. Many Catholic families retained their properties without sacrificing their creed, by conveying them to a Protestant kinsman or neighbour. The terms of the statutes were so stringent that they were obliged to trust entirely to honour and good faith; yet in no known instance was their confidence abused. Where children, really unworthy, claimed the protection of the clauses which would render them independ-

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<sup>1</sup> *Reflexions and Resolutions for the Gentlemen of Ireland, 1738.*

ent of their parents, Protestant judges and chancellors were not found to ignore in their favour the elementary principles of morality.

A few instances of appeals for maintenance will show how the law was practically worked.

The first recorded case is that of the Cusacks. By the Act of 1703, a Catholic gentleman, whose eldest son was a Protestant, became tenant for life; he was placed in the position of an owner whose estate is entailed; and since many children had been disinherited by Catholic parents as a punishment for changing their faith, the restriction, under the circumstances of the country, was not unreasonable. Robert Cusack<sup>1</sup> possessed real property, worth something over a thousand pounds a year. By his first marriage he had one son, named Adam. Becoming a widower, he married again, and had another son and a twin daughter. Family quarrels followed. The eldest son, supported by his mother's brother, insulted his stepmother, disobeyed his father, squandered money in idleness and extravagance. The father withdrew his allowance; the son, of course with the worst motives, declared himself a Protestant, and appealed for maintenance to the Court of Chancery. The case came before Sir Richard Cox, in 1705. The son pleaded that the settlement made at the first marriage had been tampered with. The father replied, that he had acted only within his legal powers. The original settlements were examined and

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<sup>1</sup> Younger brother and heir of Adam Cusack, puisne judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1672.

reported on. The Court allowed the son 80*l.* a year during his father's lifetime, which was afterwards raised to a hundred.<sup>1</sup>

Infants were not allowed to plead conversion, though supported by Protestant relatives. Application being made for maintenance for a boy of nine years old, the court ruled that the Act gave no relief till 'a child had come to years of discretion to conform.'<sup>2</sup> *Fitz Patrick v. Fitz Patrick* was a case resembling that of the Cusacks. An elder son married against his father's consent, turned Protestant, and applied for an allowance. The Chancellor, severely condemning the son's conduct, gave him 80*l.* a year, as the least which the law would permit, and enabled the father to encumber the estate very heavily, for the use of his Catholic children.<sup>3</sup>

Although the law encouraged informers, their occupation was odious. Their attempts to possess themselves of other men's properties were defeated when defeat was possible; and again, informers themselves were often in collusion with those against whom they informed, in trust for some concealed party.

Cases of course can be produced of an opposite kind;<sup>4</sup> and the practice of the courts was a very school

<sup>1</sup> Case of *Cusack v. Cusack*, 1704-5. MSS. Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> *Fitzgerald v. Fitzgerald*, June 30, 1762. *Howard's Popery Cases*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The case of Martin Blake is a good illustration of the worst operation of the Act, and shows among

other things, that it sometimes defeated its own object.

Martin Blake, a Catholic, bought some lands in the name of Sir Henry Bingham, and other lands in the name of Lynch. Sir H. Bingham, evidently in collusion with Blake, brought an action of

of lying, and a discipline of evasion. No laws could have been invented, perhaps, more ingeniously demoralizing. Yet unquestionably the Acts were not, as a whole, carried out with the triumphant recklessness of a dominant faction. The Catholics had themselves rendered legislation necessary, by introducing the question of religion into the disposition of inheritances.<sup>1</sup> The judges in these decisions at least recognized the necessity of preventing the law from being abused by profligate children.

ejectment under the Popery Act, for the lands bought by Lynch, and got a verdict. Afterwards Blake became a Protestant, and Sir H. Bingham conveyed the estate to him openly. But, on proof twelve years later, that Blake had enjoyed the profits of the lands ever since the original purchase, and that Sir H. Bingham never meddled with them, all the lands were decreed to the discoverers, and Blake was made to account for the rents which he had received meanwhile, 'there being a manifest combination to elude the Act.'—*HOWARD'S Popery Cases*, June 16, 1727.

<sup>1</sup> The Nugents' case indicated a real grievance. Hyacinthe Nugent, eldest son of Thomas Nugent, of Pallas, called Lord Riverstown, a Catholic, with large estates, conformed to the Established Church,

and married Susanne Catharine, daughter of Sir Tristram Beresford—the Popery Act being accepted by the Beresfords as guaranteeing a settlement on the wife. Lord Riverstown refusing to make an allowance, the son joined the English army in Spain, and served as a cornet of dragoons. Thence he returned to Ireland, when, 'by pernicious Popish counsels and other wicked insinuations,' he was prevailed on to forsake his wife and return to Popery; and, 'in order to elude the law and injure his wife,' went, 'by means of his Popish relations, into France to the service of the French king.' The case came before Parliament, and, by a private Act, in 1711, the wife was allowed a maintenance out of Lord Riverstown's estates.—*MSS.* Dublin Castle.

## SECTION III.

THE working of the second branch of the penal laws directed against the succession of the clergy, may be described more briefly. These laws, though more definite in theory than the laws affecting property, more in accordance with the general practice of Europe, and justified by provocations with which no people in the world but the English would have dealt so forbearingly, remained a dead letter on the statute book, and were heard of only in periodical lamentations over their neglect. The Catholic religion, though proscribed and insulted, was suffered to grow unchecked, to take exclusive possession of the increasing numbers of the peasantry, to educate them, to mould and shape them from their cradles to their graves, and to neutralize the natural disposition to please their political superiors, which, had they been let alone, would have swept them into conformity.

‘If the Popish clergy were as effectually removed as the Huguenot ministers,’ says the writer whom I have so often quoted,<sup>1</sup> ‘we should soon see our churches filled with converts.’ It was first necessary that there should be churches for them to fill. Zealous as they had been for their own privileges—clamorous against Dissenters—in possession of all the wealth of the ancient sees—so rich that, when they went to England,

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<sup>1</sup> *Reflections and Resolutions for the Gentlemen of Ireland.*

they required separate vessels to carry their horses and servants to Holyhead—with sufficient influence over the peers and the leading gentry to perpetuate the disabilities of the Presbyterians, and drive them by swarms into exile, the hierarchy of the Irish Establishment had provided, in 1728, for the spiritual instruction of the entire island 600 beneficed clergy.<sup>1</sup> That was the sum of their militant forces all told. So poor were the incumbencies, that though pluralities were unabated, and eight, nine, sometimes twelve or thirteen cures of souls were heaped on one man, his whole income did not always reach 100*l.* a year. On these 600 men were thrown, by the law, not only the Church services, but the duty of providing schools in every parish; yet the Government allowed the bishops to prohibit the scattered Protestant settlements from electing pastors of their own; and, in the face of so extraordinary a combination of negligence and bigotry, the execution of the law to prevent the incoming of priests from abroad, or the ordination of fresh priests at home, was of course impossible. It was left to stand a confession of impotence, to bring law itself

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<sup>1</sup> There are in Ireland 600 incumbents and, I fear, near 3000 Popish priests. 'The Primate (Archbishop Boulter) to the Duke of Newcastle, March 7, 1728.' *MSS. Record Office.* By contrasting the number of incumbents with the number of priests, the Primate indicates that the curates were either too few in number, or too

insignificant in themselves to be worth considering. 'The bulk of our clergy,' he goes on, 'have neither parsonage houses nor glebes. Yet, except we get more churches and chapels, and more resident incumbents, instead of gaining ground on the Papists, we must lose to them as we do in many places.'

into contempt. While he gave so miserable an account of the Establishment, the Primate was obliged to add, that there were 3000 priests in Ireland. All, or almost all of them, were by that time, according to the letter of the statute, liable to transportation; and to death as felons if they returned. Yet chapels were built, and mass was said openly without interference. Occasionally, when there were threats of invasion, some spasmodic onslaught was directed half insincerely from the Castle. But sheriffs shrunk from issuing warrants. Grand juries might send up bills, but petty juries refused to convict. Informers, so ready to betray Rapparees and Tories, could neither be bribed or frightened into giving evidence against the clergy. Country magistrates, without a certainty of support from the Government, would not court unpopularity by gratuitous activity, which might embroil them with their tenants; and the Government at home, in alliance usually with one or other of the Catholic powers, made a merit of yielding to the intercession of foreign ambassadors, and ordering the suspension of the laws against their co-religionists.<sup>1</sup> Even when there was

<sup>1</sup> From the multitude of reports I select two almost at random. In the alarm of 1715 the grand jury of King's County desired Secretary Dawson to acquaint the Viceroy, 'that the late insolent behaviour of the Papists in that county was owing to the priests not being brought to justice,' and 'that several persons who were active in summoning persons to give evi-

dence against them had been threatened.' 'That priests officiated generally who had not taken the Oath of Abjuration, and who were not registered.' 'That many indictments had been presented by the Grand Jury, but only one priest in the county had been tried and convicted.'

The Grand Jury of Galway reported that:—'Great numbers

real alarm, and the Castle authorities had roused themselves, the magistrates had learnt by experience, that negligence was less dangerous to them than promptitude. In a common-place book of some responsible person, perhaps one of the judges, there is a passage on the subject which is curiously explicit. 'The Papists,' says this writer, 'by law are allowed a priest in every parish, which are registered in pursuance of an Act of Parliament made ten years ago. All bishops, regulars, and other priests, not registered, are banished, and none allowed to come into the kingdom under severe penalties. The design was, that there should be no succession, and many of those then registered are since dead. Yet, for want of due execution of the laws, many are come in from foreign parts, and there are in the country Popish bishops concealed that ordain many. Little enquiry of late has been made into these matters. As to the Roman Catholics I think it impossible, while they continue such, to reconcile them to his majesty's interest; and, therefore, all means

of friars had within very few years come into the kingdom, and settled themselves in that county. At the close of the late reign *great discouragement had been given by the men then in power to such as were active in suppressing friaries and putting the laws in execution.* After such discouragements they conceived it would be of singular use to issue commands to the magistrates to be more vigorous for the future, and to direct the

military power to assist them. At the late quarter sessions great numbers of priests had been presented for celebrating mass, not having taken the Oath of Abjuration, and several Papists of the first rank for carrying arms, not having qualified themselves so to do. Those presentments were in the hand of the clerk of the peace, but no process had issued pursuant to them.'—*MSS.* Dublin Castle, 1715.



ought to be used to prevent their doing mischief. *Our laws are already too severe against them, but meet with no execution, and the management towards them has been so uncertain for fifty years last past, in truth ever since the Reformation, that none dare trust the Government so far as to exert themselves in earnest against them; for such an act, in a few years, it is imputed to him as a crime.*<sup>1</sup>

As in later times, an Ecclesiastical Titles Bill passed through Parliament with acclamation, yet, from the first day that it received the consent of the Crown, was treated with ostentatious contempt, so these seemingly barbarous statutes against the Irish Catholic clergy were but as unshotted cannon, loud sounding and conspicuously impotent. Those priests who went through the form of registering themselves and taking the oaths were treated as poor creatures, and were removed from their cures to make way for bolder spirits.<sup>2</sup>

In 1721, in Dublin itself, under the very shadow of the Castle, the Catholic Primate resided, ordained clergy, and exercised jurisdiction without attempt at concealment. A bishop of Meath and a body of

<sup>1</sup> *MSS. Ireland.* Record Office, vol. cccxxxix.

<sup>2</sup> 'The priests take the Oath of Abjuration, but confess it as a sin to other priests, and receive absolution. It is a melancholy reflection of living among men whom neither oath can bind, nor justice and lenity oblige to fidelity to our Established Church. We

receive daily information of multitudes coming lately into this kingdom, and their superiors turning out the registered priests as a dull inactive sort of people, and placing others in their stead, who will be more useful to their evil purposes.' — 'Gilbert Ormsby to Secretary Dawson, October 13, 1712.' *MSS. Dublin Castle.*

Capuchins found shelter under the roof of an officer in the service of the Crown;<sup>1</sup> and there were other establishments of Augustinians, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Dominicans, whose existence was perfectly well known to the authorities. The bishops lived in quasi retirement for a few years after the passing of the Act, but they emerged as they found themselves unmolested, and their assistance soon came to be made use of in the Government of the country. English administrations, one after the other, thinking of nothing but the convenience of the moment, saw the Catholic Irish doubling and trebling their numbers, and took no heed of a phenomenon which would not ripen in their time to mischief. The Catholics were a weapon in their hands to keep the Protestant gentry from being troublesome. They allowed the penal laws to stand, and the odium of them to rest on the Irish Parliament. But the success which would have been the justification of those laws, they took care to make impossible; thus ensuring their eventual repeal with the ignominy which necessarily attaches to tyranny which has failed.

So cruel or so careless was the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, that he would not even make known his real wishes. If the Catholic clergy were not to be punished, they ought to have been recog-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Todos estos frailes capuchinos viven en la misma capilla que fué fabricada en la casa de M. Clemens, pagador en la tesorería de su Mag<sup>d</sup>.' MSS. Record Office. The account from which I quote being in Spanish proves whence these monks had come.'

nized. A carefully considered plan was submitted to the Crown, by which a supply of secular priests could be maintained and licensed, while the regular clergy should be removed.<sup>1</sup> But the Irish Parliament were still allowed to believe, that England sincerely wished that Popery should be extinguished. Viceroy after Viceroy was permitted to urge from the throne a more thorough execution of the law; and the Protestant gentry, conscious of the dangers to which they were increasingly exposed by the multiplication of the Catholics, in defiance of a law which it was inevitable that they must resent, were encouraged in their perplexity to invent fresh penalties of which the threat might perhaps prove a deterrent. Left to themselves they could have perhaps themselves removed a law which they could not carry out. Sir Robert Walpole preferred that they should stand over the Catholics with a brandished whip, and that he and England should earn the gratitude of the bishops and priests, by arresting the arm ere it could fall.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Charles Hogg to the King, December 10, 1723.' *MSS. Record Office.*

## SECTION IV.

SINCE forcible conversion was tacitly abandoned, the form of Protestantism which could hope to become the religion of Ireland, could be only that which showed spontaneous vitality. Congregations were willing to support Catholic priests; congregations were willing to support Presbyterian ministers. The clergy of the Anglo-Irish Church existed only on endowments. The Presbyterians made converts among the Catholics; the Church made none, or only such as she could have better spared, which were made for her by the Popery Act; while, for every reluctant or interested conformist, she lost ten, twenty, or thirty of the scattered Protestant peasantry in the southern provinces, to whom she forbade their own ministrations, and who, since they could not have what they desired, preferred the priest and the goodwill of their neighbours. Cruel and even blind as England was to Ireland's interests on so many sides, she at least perceived the absurdity of maintaining the Test clause. If the peasantry were not to be driven, there was still a chance that they might be won; and no sooner was George the First on the throne, and the Tory junta dismissed and scattered, than Wharton's policy was revived, and the removal of the Test, so unhappily and inadvertently imposed, became the most ardently desired object of the new ministers. When the rebellion began in

Scotland, an insurrection in Ireland had been confidently looked for.<sup>1</sup> The militia were again called out. The Presbyterian leaders held a meeting at Belfast to consider how they should act; and, though strictly disqualified, they came to an honourable resolution, 'to risk everything for his majesty's service,' and trust to the clemency of the Government to screen them from prosecution. They communicated their intentions to Mr. Conolly, a distinguished member of the Irish Council. Conolly wrote to the Lords Justices, guaranteeing their loyalty; and, at his request, commissions were issued to the Presbyterian gentlemen. The ranks of the regiments were immediately filled; and, over and above the regular troops, thirty thousand men were at once in arms, sufficient, if rebellion had been attempted, to crush it out on the instant. The lesson was not thrown away. Owing to the leaven of Jacobitism in the Establishment, the Presbyterian was the only body on whom England could thoroughly rely in a struggle with the Pretender. The Queen's death had dissolved the last Parliament. A new election, it was hoped, would give the Liberal party in the Lower House a sufficient majority to enable the Government to force the repeal of the Test clause upon the Peers.

The Regium Donum, which had been discontinued for four years, was restored and increased. Sunderland, a tried friend to the Dissenting interest, was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sir William Caulfield to Secretary Delafaye, August 1, 1715  
*MSS.* Record Office.

appointed Viceroy. Sunderland himself was unable to leave London; but he received a deputation from the Ulster Synod, and promised them all the aid in his power. The Duke of Grafton and Lord Galway came over as Lords Justices, and by them Parliament was opened on the 14th of November.

The battle seemed to be won, when Conolly, the Presbyterians' especial supporter, was elected Speaker by a large majority.

The speech from the throne recommended 'such unanimity as might end all distinctions, save those between Protestant and Papist.'<sup>1</sup> The Commons, after a passionate censure of the late Tory Ministry, charging it with having brought the Protestant interest to the edge of destruction, took into consideration the heads of a bill for the security of the King's government, in which, among other provisions, was a clause indemnifying the Presbyterians who had accepted commissions, and declaring that, for the future, Non-conformists might hold rank in the army and militia without danger of prosecution. A measure of relief so small and tentative, so obviously politic and just, was not carried without violent opposition. It was carried, however, and was sent to the Upper House. At once the animosities which had broken up the last Parliament revived in all their fury.

The bishops and clergy had been unable to prevent the establishment on the throne of the House of Hanover, the symbol of the principles which they

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals* November 14 1715.

most feared and hated; and disappointment made them furious. So violent were the clergy, that few of them could be found to mention the names of the King and the Royal family in their prayers before their sermons.<sup>1</sup>

The Peers and Commons formed themselves into a loyal association for the protection of the King's person. The bishops could not refuse to join without confessing themselves traitors; but the Primate, after a three days' struggle, when everyone but himself had signed, at length only attached his name with an ill grace on the margin of the page, from which it could be cut off when the Pretender came to his own.<sup>2</sup>

To men in such a humour the Dissenters' Relief Bill was as oil on the fire. Perceiving that the clause would be carried in the Lower House, the Archbishop of Dublin anticipated its appearance by introducing the heads of a second Indemnity Bill of his own, holding the Dissenters harmless for what they had already done, but maintaining their disabilities for the future as rigidly as ever. Everyone of the bishops supporting him, he carried his point, and, instead of consider-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Most of the clergy neglect to mention his majesty and their Royal Highnesses in the prayers before their sermons, which is an omission we cannot redress without a direct order from the King.'— 'Secretary Delafaye to Lord Stanhope, January 22, 1716. MSS. Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Primate signed at the

bottom, from whence his name might be cut off in time convenient. He did it, but with a very ill grace, two or three days after everybody else.'— 'Delafaye to Stanhope, January 24, 1716.' MSS. Record Office. The bond with Lindsay's name attached, as Delafaye describes, is in the Record Office.

ing the heads which came from the Commons, the Lords sent in the Archbishop's bill by the side of the other, for the Council to digest them into one, for transmission to England.

In the Council the question was rediscussed, and the Duke of Grafton laboured hard to bring about a compromise. The bishops condescended to admit that they did not wish the Dissenters to be prosecuted for having taken arms, when they were called on by the Government, to defend the country. They agreed at last that commissions in the militia should be opened to them then and always; but the regular army, in the fear that admission to military service would be a prelude to future demands, they were determined to keep for ever closed against them.<sup>1</sup>

A proposal by one of the Council, that Nonconformists should hold commissions in the army during the continuance of the rebellion, was carried only in a full board by a majority of one. Unless the Church was disestablished, or unless the Archbishop of Canterbury could be persuaded to interfere, the Duke of Grafton was obliged to tell Lord Stanhope that no measure of relief, which was not a mockery, could be carried through the Upper House as at present constituted. As qualified by the Council the bill might

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<sup>1</sup> Swift frankly explains the reason:—

'However indifferent men may be to religion,' he says, 'they know if latitude was allowed to Dissenters, the few such employ-

ments left us in cities and corporations would find other hands lay hold on them.'—'Address to both Houses of Parliament by the Drapier.' *Works*, vol. vii.



pass. If returned in the shape in which it left the Commons, it would be infallibly rejected.<sup>1</sup>

The resolute obstinacy, three parts disloyal and one part bigoted, of the Irish hierarchy, explains the subsequent practice, which has been made a subject of such bitter reproach by Irish patriotic writers, of filling so many vacancies on the bench by Englishmen.

1716 Something might be said for a genuine Protestant ascendancy in Ireland,—something for the native Catholics who desired to increase their hold upon a country which they believed to belong to themselves. What plea of policy or equity could be found for leaving so critical a part of the British dominions at the discretion of a handful of prelates, whose existence depended on the support of a King whom they in their hearts disowned, and on the swords of the northern Protestants whom they abhorred and trampled on? <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The House of Lords to render the good intentions of the House of Commons ineffectual, have passed another bill with the same title and to the same purpose, but without the above clause. Both are now before the Council to frame one bill out of the two. We hope the clause may be carried; but it is more than probable, if the bill returns to us without alteration, it will be rejected in the House of Lords. We advise, therefore, that the bill be so altered by you that the exemption relating to the army might continue only during the

present rebellion, and from thence to the end of the ensuing session of Parliament. Thus qualified, the bishops will let it pass through the House of Lords, else it will be lost by a large majority. Better speak to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop and others, we believe, have written to him.'—'Grafton to Stanhope, February 15.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> A remarkable letter was written at this time by some Irishman of consequence to Lord Molesworth, and by Molesworth forwarded, without the writer's name, to Stanhope.

A way out of the difficulty was suggested, which shows in its very structure how proof against the plainest monitions of prudence and justice was Irish High Church prejudice.

‘There must be no law,’ wrote Henry Maxwell, a distinguished member of the Irish Parliament, to Lord Molesworth, ‘to hinder the Protestants of this country to unite against the common enemy. The body of our Dissenters consists of the middle and meaner sort of people, chiefly in the North. Not many of them are estated men compared with those of the Established Church; so that, when these disabilities are taken off, want of fortune and interest will always hinder them from coming into the militia in dangerous numbers.

‘The Archbishop of Tuam is like to die. You know this country, and our unfortunate condition in relation to gentlemen of that rank. There is not one that can justly be called a Whig, not among those that were made since the King’s accession. Yet several were as hearty Whigs as you and I before they were made bishops. I mean they seemed so. It would be very good if we had three or four eminent staunch bishops that would not be shocked, and would stand in the gap against the majority. This would bring the clergy round. *The clause in the Security Bill they are fighting against would give liberty to at least a hundred thousand able-bodied entirely well-affected men. These are they that bravely kept footing*

in Ireland when other Protestants fled the kingdom — that fought naked for King William, our liberties, our religion, and all that was dear to us. We cannot expect them to fight our battles if we do not let them rise above common soldiers. We are now raising thirteen regiments here, and I dare aver it, unless four parts in six be dissenting common soldiers, the most won’t be Protestants. . . . I am rather of opinion, therefore, that bishops should be sent from England. I used to wish only Irish to be chosen; but, after being disappointed so often, it seems hopeless to expect that the most promising Irishman will remain Whig.’ *MSS. Ireland.*  
Record Office, March 27, 1716.

Pass that part of the law, and you will do nothing but good. *As to the army, it would be highly to the prejudice of the King and his service if that clause should pass.* The number of Dissenters in our House does not exceed, if it reaches, to the number of six. In the late Parliament they came to but four. They can never have an interest to reach to ten, and they are of little weight when they are there, for their education is generally narrow. In the House of Lords there is not one Dissenter of weight; so that if the clause come over, it will divide and break the King's best friends in our House, and will give the King's enemies, which is the only thing they want, a handle of clamour; it will widen and perpetuate our divisions, which, if that law do not pass in your Council, are in a fair way of being healed. Reject it, and it will be a handsome compliment to the Church, and things will go easily in both Houses.'<sup>1</sup>

Consistently anxious to remove these pernicious disabilities, Stanhope and Sunderland declined to act on Maxwell's suggestions. The military strength of Protestant Ireland lay, as they well knew, in the despised Dissenters; and to disqualify brave and loyal men for advancement in the regular army because they professed a creed which was the established religion of Scotland, was absurd. The bill was postponed till the bench of bishops could be leavened with some healthier elements. The Commons passed

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<sup>1</sup> 'H. Maxwell to Lord Molesworth, April 9, 1716.' *MSS. Ireland*. Record Office.

a resolution that the Dissenters who had received commissions had done seasonable service, and that whoever prosecuted them was an enemy to the King and the Protestant interest. There, for the moment, the matter was let drop. An attempt was made to console the Presbyterians by promising them instead of a removal of the Test, the English Toleration Act, which would leave their religion undisturbed, while the disqualifications for service were maintained. They declined an offer which they justly regarded as an insult. They insisted that they were entitled to the same privileges which were conceded to the Scotch Episcopalians; who, though as disloyal as they were themselves loyal, and, like themselves, were Dissenters from the Established religion, yet suffered under no vexatious exclusion from civil or military employment.

Stanhope would not part with the hope of securing them substantial justice. After 1715 the Irish Parliament met only in alternate years, voting double supplies. In 1719, under the Viceroyalty of the Duke of Bolton, the opportunity was taken of a <sup>1719</sup> fresh alarm to revive the question. The Duke, in opening the session, recommended a better agreement among Protestants in the presence of the strict union and notorious disaffection of the Catholics. A sketch of a bill had been sent from England to be produced if the temper of the two Houses promised favourably. It was an equivalent to a simple repeal of the Sacramental Test clause. Conolly, when asked his advice

by the Viceroy, recommended that the initiative should be left to the Irish Parliament. Whether the Lower House would concede a large measure of relief he considered extremely doubtful. The Peers would reject any measure of relaxation, however mild, if it was recommended from England. The bill was, therefore, kept back. The Viceroy told the Parliament, that he trusted they would discover some means by which an agreement could be brought about; and the King sent a special message of earnest entreaty, that the Presbyterian claims should receive consideration.

The humour of the Upper House, it very soon appeared, was unchanged; while the Commons, as the rebellion was forgotten, were less disposed to generosity than before. The Brodricks had hitherto been steady on the Liberal side. The old Speaker, now Lord Midleton, continued constant to his principles. His son, young Alan, for some unknown reason, had gone over to the bishops; and, backed by a knot of High Churchmen, who were called the Cork squadron, resisted a relaxation of the Test with the fiercest determination.<sup>1</sup> Archbishop King, failing to see the sarcasm which he was uttering against the Establishment, declared that the tests were its only protection,

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<sup>1</sup> The bishops had introduced clauses into their leases, forbidding the erection of meeting-houses on any part of their estates. They had induced many great landowners to follow the example. The practice was spreading. The Government party brought the subject before the Commons, and proposed a resolution that, in lay leases, such clauses should be inadmissible. The opposition was so strong, however, that they did not venture to press a division.—‘The Duke of Bolton to Secretary Craggs, July 16, 1719.’ *MSS. Ireland*. Record Office.

and that, without them, Protestant Ireland would be Presbyterian. A Toleration Act, such as they had refused before, more meagre than that which now stands on the Irish statute book—a bill giving Non-conformists a bare permission to meet for worship in their own chapels, while the tests were sternly upheld—this was all that could be obtained. The heads were sent to England; and the Viceroy wrote, that nothing more need be looked for.<sup>1</sup>

Stanhope gave up the contest. No longer attempting to throw open even the commissions in the militia, he contented himself with adding a paragraph, giving the benefit of the Act to Dissenters already under prosecution. Even this slight amendment was received with suspicion. Young Brodrick argued that, under cover of such a clause, a Dissenter might have stolen into a fellowship at Trinity College, or might have taught in a village school, and yet escape punishment. His chimerical terrors were with difficulty removed by the crown lawyers, and, on the 16th of October, this wretched mockery of justice and common sense passed through the Lower House.

For the Peers, lean as it was, the bill proved almost too much. The majority of Irish noblemen were already absentees; but on a question on which passion was stirred so deeply, the attendance was unusually large. Had the bishops' phalanx been unbroken, they would have been irresistible, and the bill would

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Bolton to Secretary Craggs, July 18.' *MSS. Ireland.* Record Office.

have been lost. Fortunately the advice to supply the vacant sees from England had not been neglected. Sixteen prelates were in their places: of them the Viceroy had now secured the support of six, and the neutrality of a seventh. The three Archbishops struggled as if the Christian faith itself was at stake. The Primate called schism a damnable sin. The Archbishop of Dublin insisted, in the usual style, that a door was being opened to every kind of wild extravagance. The bill was eventually carried by a majority of 39 to 26.<sup>1</sup> The minority, with the Archbishops at their head, recorded their protest in their Journals. Archbishop King complained to his brother of Canterbury, that the good cause had been betrayed by false brethren intruded on the bench from England. Unless God, by unforeseen Providence, supported it, the Church of Ireland he considered to be lost; and the occasion of his panic was the simple permission to the Presbyterians, who had saved Ireland from Tyrconnell, who formed two-thirds of the Protestant population of Ulster, to open chapels of their own. Though they were incapacitated from holding public employments, though their marriages were invalid, though they were forbidden to open a single school, or hold any office in town or country above the rank of petty constable, the mere existence of Nonconformists as a body legally recognized was considered a fatal omen to the Church

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<sup>1</sup> Of the six bishops who voted for the Government five were English Whigs appointed since the accession of George the First, and only one was an Irishman. Of the nine who were in the minority, seven were Irish and two English.

of Ireland. The Church of Ireland must have been a very feeble institution.<sup>1</sup>

And now recommenced the Protestant emigration, which robbed Ireland of the bravest defenders of English interests, and peopled the American sea-board with fresh flights of Puritans. Twenty thousand left Ulster on the destruction of the woollen trade. Many more were driven away by the first passing of the Test Act. The stream had slackened, in the hope that the

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Statutes*, George I. cap. 3. The hesitation of the Government and the long delay in the promotion of Berkeley, is a favourite subject of complaint among Irish Protestants; nameless Englishmen having been promoted over the head of their most distinguished scholar. Berkeley's Toryism was more extreme than Swift's, and what Irish clerical Tories were, the reader will have partly seen. His *Treatise on Passive Obedience* was published during the Harley-St. John ascendancy, and was written avowedly in support of Phipps and Ormond and the Jacobite conspirators. Lord Stanhope had, notwithstanding, been so struck with Berkeley's genius, that he had intended to promote him in 1716. An Irish clergyman, an acquaintance of Lord Molesworth, wrote to remonstrate against an appointment which would mischievously strengthen Archbishop King. 'The treatise' (on Passive Obedience), this person said, 'came out at a time when a dangerous attack was made by the late

ministry on the liberties of the kingdom, for which service Dr. Berkeley has been highly esteemed by all the Jacobites in Ireland. He travelled with Lord Peterborough; has been, and still is, a creature of Dean Swift; and is reckoned here as much in the Tory interest as the highest Churchman of them all.'—'Rev. Duke Tyrrell to the Right Hon. R. Molesworth, May 14, 1716.' *MSS. Record Office.*

Molesworth interfered, and the good intentions of the Government towards Berkeley were postponed. The world forms its judgments heedlessly; and seeing that Berkeley was a great man, and that he was long passed over in favour of his inferiors, it rushes to the conclusion that he was unfairly neglected. When men of genius lend themselves to politics and the support of measures like the Presbyterian disabilities, their opinions may be at least as legitimate a disqualification for office as the religious belief which they insist on persecuting.



law would be altered. When the prospect was finally closed, men of spirit and energy refused to remain in a country where they were held unfit to receive the right of citizens; and thenceforward, until the spell of tyranny was broken in 1782, annual shiploads of families poured themselves out from Belfast and Londonderry. The resentment which they carried with them continued to burn in their new homes; and, in the War of Independence, England had no fiercer enemies than the great-grandsons of the Presbyterians who had held Ulster against Tyrconnell.

The Irish Council were startled at the dimensions which the Exodus assumed. 'The worst of it,' wrote Archbishop Boulter, 'is, that it carries off only Protestants, and reigns chiefly in the North.'<sup>1</sup> Parliament ordered an inquiry and heard evidence, as if it was some inexplicable mystery. An official report distinctly stated, that the Test was at least one of the causes.<sup>2</sup> The ministers reminded the Government that, when the Test clause was first passed, an early repeal of it was promised: the promise had not been kept, and 'the hardships under which their people laboured on that account were so grievous, that they were transporting themselves to America for the sake of the liberty and ease which they were denied in their native country.'<sup>3</sup> Still the Irish Parliament could not

<sup>1</sup> 'The Primate to the Duke of Newcastle, November 23, 1728.' MSS. Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Report on the Causes of the Emigration from Ireland, June 6, 1729.' Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 'Address of the Protestant Ministers of the South of Ireland, 1729.' Ibid.

recognize its folly. The Duke of Newcastle, in 1732, intended to make another effort. A bill was sent over for the more effectual disarming of the Catholics; and as the Test had been imposed by a clause introduced in England into a Catholic penal bill, the Duke thought it might be removed by a similar manoeuvre. He consulted Archbishop Boulter who was then Primate. But Boulter, though himself wishing the Dissenters well, warned him that he would fail. Times were changed, he said. There was less irritation against Popery, and more anger against England. A clause introduced by the English Cabinet would, on that account alone, be rejected by the patriots of the Lower House. The clergy would oppose it to a man; they were so bitter that the Whig bishops sent from England could hardly restrain them from railing against Dissent in their sermons. 'Dean Swift' was already in the field, and 'had sounded the alarm.' The thing could not be done.<sup>1</sup>

'It is indeed extraordinary,' Newcastle replied, 'that such a clause should be liable to meet with difficulties in either House in a country where no distinctions should be kept up among Protestants, which might be the occasion of disuniting them.'<sup>2</sup>

Extraordinary it might be, but it was a fact which could not be changed.<sup>3</sup>

And so the emigration continued. The young, the

<sup>1</sup> 'The Primate to the Duke of Newcastle, January 4 and 15, 1732.' MSS. Record Office.

February 5, 1732.' Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Primate to the Duke of Newcastle, February 19.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Newcastle to the Primate,

courageous, the energetic, the earnest, those alone among her colonists who, if Ireland was ever to be a Protestant country, could be effective missionaries, were torn up by the roots, flung out, and bid find a home elsewhere ; and they found a home to which England fifty years later had to regret that she had allowed them to be driven.

Singular complication ! First a Protestant exodus to America, and now a Catholic from the same country. Each emigrant, and each class of emigrants, carrying away in their hearts a sense of intolerable wrong, and a hungry craving for revenge.

## SECTION V.

THE responsibility for the mismanagement of Ireland must be divided equally between England and the Irish colony. With a perversity of mis-<sup>1716</sup>understanding, whatever salutary measure England recommended the Irish Parliament thwarted; when the Irish Parliament saw their way clearly, England was wilfully blind, or deliberately cruel.

With their shipping destroyed by the Navigation Act, their woollen manufactures taken from them, their trade in all its branches crippled and confined, the single recourse left to those of the Irish who still nourished dreams of improving the unfortunate country was agriculture. The soil, at least, was their own; a soil which needed only to be drained, cleared of weeds, and manured, to produce grass-crops and corn-crops as rich as the best in England. Here was employment for a population three times more numerous than as yet existed. Here was a prospect, if not of commercial wealth, yet of substantial comfort and material abundance.

The Irish peasant was indolent. The glorification of idleness, the contempt of work as base and ignoble, had been instilled into him for fifty generations, and was in the granules of his blood. The earth-tillers everywhere had been the drudges of the tribe—wretches too mean for the honourable employments

of stealing and murdering; and of the fruits of their ignominious toil they had been allowed no more by their own chiefs, than sufficed to keep them alive. The Elizabethan landlords had been scarcely lighter masters. The peasants sowed the crop for the masters to reap; and it was not till the Puritans broke in upon the pleasant ways of the old oppressors, and instead of the sword of tyranny ruled Ireland with a sword of justice, that any labourer could call his work his own. The reign of Charles the Second, while the Cromwellians were still in the land, was looked back upon in the following century as an island of prosperity in the ocean of general wretchedness. In Charles the Second's time the absentees were few. The huge estates had not yet devoured the smaller allotments, nor the plough and peasant's spade been laid by to rust, while the bogs crept back over the meadows which the Cromwellians had reclaimed. The poor Irish were brought for a generation into the same condition with their fellow labourers in other parts of the world, and they had the same encouragement to industry. But the change was too shortlived to alter a type which had been moulded by centuries of injustice. The Puritan farmers, under the pressure of Jeremy Taylor and his brother bishops, sold their holdings. Tyrconnell and Catholic ascendancy broke up the scattered Protestant establishments, destroyed their stock, and threw the country into a wilderness again. Many never came back to resume their profitless task, and the land jobbing finished the ruin which

the war had left incomplete. Whole counties fell into the hands of favourites or speculators; and the management was left to middlemen, who again pared the peasant to the bone. The trade in butter and salt meat, which England had graciously consented to leave, with the vast profits, of which I shall speak elsewhere, to be made out of wool smuggling, tempted alike landowners and leaseholders to stock meadow and mountain with sheep and black cattle. In 1727 the average size of the farms, in the three southern provinces, ranged from 300 to 1000 Irish acres.<sup>1</sup> The tenants were forbidden in their leases to break or plough the soil.<sup>2</sup> The people no longer employed were driven away into holes and corners, and eked out a wretched subsistence by potato gardens, or by keeping starving cattle of their own on the neglected bogs. Their numbers increased, for they married early, and they were no longer liable, as in the old times, to be killed off like dogs in forays. They grew up in compulsory idleness, encouraged once more in their inherited dislike of labour, and enured to wretchedness and hunger;<sup>3</sup> and, on every failure of the potato crop,

<sup>1</sup> 'Heads of a bill for promoting husbandry, 1727.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> 'Besides this, of late years, many landlords have begun a practice to tie down their tenants by express covenants, not to break up or plough their lands; by which covenants, highly prejudicial to the public good of the country, our desolation and want of tillage

is increasing.'—Ibid. Swift also, in his pamphlet on *The Use of Irish Manufactures*, says, 'The landlords everywhere, by penal clauses, prohibit their tenants from ploughing.'

<sup>3</sup> In 1729 the population of Ireland was roughly guessed at a million and a half. The author of an *Essay on Trade*, published in that year, and addressed to Lord

hundreds of thousands were starving. Of corn very little was grown anywhere in Ireland. It was imported from England, Holland, Italy, and France, but in quantities unequal to any sudden demand. The disgrace of allowing a nation of human beings to subsist under such conditions, forced itself at last on the conscience of the Irish Parliament, and though composed of landowners who were tempted as much as others to let their farms on the terms most profitable to them, the House of Commons in 1716, resolved unanimously to make an effort for a general change of system, and to reclaim both people and country by bringing back and stimulating agriculture. They passed a vote that covenants which prohibited the breaking soil with the plough were impolitic, and should have no binding force. They passed heads of a bill, which they recommended with the utmost earnestness to the consideration of the English Council, enjoining that for every hundred acres which any tenant held, he should break up and cultivate five; and, as a further encouragement, that a trifling bounty should be granted by the Government on corn grown for exportation.

And what did England answer?—England which was so wisely anxious for the prosperity of the Protestant interest in Ireland? — England which was

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<p>Carteret gives this number as the estimate currently received; but he adds, that there was a difference of opinion, and by a calculation of his own raises it one-fourth higher. The hearth-money collectors returned in 1726, he said, 374,286</p>	<p>houses in Ireland as paying duty, besides colleges, hospitals, barracks, and other exempt tenements. In all he thought there might be 416,000 houses, which, allowing five inmates to each, would give a population of over two millions.</p>
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struggling so pathetically to make the Irish Peers and gentlemen understand the things that belonged to their peace. The bounty system might, or might not, have been well calculated to produce the effect which Ireland desired. It was the system, however, which England herself practised with every industry which she wished to encourage; and it was not on economic grounds that the Privy Council rejected a bill which they ought rather to have thrust of their own accord on Irish acceptance. The real motive was probably the same which had led to the suppression of the manufactures; the detestable opinion that, to govern Ireland conveniently, Ireland must be kept weak. Although the corn consumed in Ireland had been for many years imported, the English farmers were haunted with a terror of being undersold in their own and foreign markets, by a country where labour was cheap. A motive so iniquitous could not be confessed—but the objections which the Council was not ashamed to allege were scarcely less disgraceful to them. The English manufacturers having secured, as they supposed, the monopoly of Irish wool on their own terms, conceived that the whole soil of Ireland ought to be devoted to growing it. The merchants of Tiverton and Bideford had recently memorialized the Crown on the diminution of the number of fleeces which reached them from the Irish ports. They attributed the falling-off to the contraband trade between Ireland and France, which shortened their supplies, enhanced the price, and gave the French weavers



an advantage over them.<sup>1</sup> Their conjecture, as will be hereafter shown, was perfectly just. The contraband trade, as had been foreseen, when the restrictions were imposed, had become enormous. But the Commissioners of the Irish Revenue were unwilling to confess to carelessness. They pretended that the Irish farmers, forgetting their obligations to England, and thinking wickedly only of their own interests, were diminishing their stock of sheep, breaking up the soil, and growing wheat and barley.<sup>2</sup> The allegation unhappily was utterly untrue. But the mere rumour of a rise of industry in Ireland created a panic in the commercial circles of England. Although the change existed as yet only in desire, and the sheep-farming, with its attending miseries, was increasing rather than diminishing, Stanhope, Walpole, Sunderland, and the other advisers of the English Crown met the overtures of the Irish Parliament in a spirit of settled hostility, and with an infatuation which now appears like insanity, determined to keep closed the one remaining avenue by which Ireland could have recovered a gleam of prosperity.

The heads of the bill were carried in Ireland without a serious suspicion that it would be received unfavourably. A few scornful members dared to say, that England would consent to nothing which would really benefit Ireland, but they were indignantly

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<sup>1</sup> 'Petitions from Tiverton and Bideford, November 16 and December 30, 1714.' *MSS. Record Office.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Reply of the Commissioners of the Revenue, February, 1715. *Ibid.*

silenced by the friends of the Government. It was sent over by the Duke of Grafton, with the fullest expectation that it would be returned. He learnt first, with great surprise, that 'the Tillage Bill was meeting with difficulties.' 'It was a measure,' he said, 'which the gentlemen of the country had very much at heart, as the only way left them to improve their estates, while they were under such hard restrictions in point of trade.'<sup>1</sup> 'It would be unkind,' he urged in a second more pressing letter, 'to refuse Ireland anything not unreasonable in itself.' 'He conceived the Corn Bill was not of that nature, and therefore earnestly requested his majesty would be pleased to indulge them in it.'<sup>2</sup>

Stanhope forwarded in answer a report of the English Commissioners of Customs, which had the merit of partial candour:—'Corn,' they said, 'is supposed to be at so low a rate in Ireland in comparison with England, that an encouragement to the exportation of it would prejudice the English trade.'<sup>3</sup>

The Lords Justices returned the conclusive rejoinder that, for some years past, Ireland had imported large quantities of corn from England, which would have been impossible had her own corn been cheaper. 'They could not help representing,' they said, 'the concern they were under to find that verified which those all along foretold who obstructed the King's

<sup>1</sup> 'The Lords Justices to Lord Stanhope, January 22, 1716.' MSS. Record Office.

Stanhope, January 30.' Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 'Lord Stanhope to the Lords Justices, March 2.' Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Lords Justices to Lord

affairs, and which his friends had constantly denied, that all the marks they had given of duty and affection, would not procure one bill for the benefit of the nation.’<sup>1</sup>

The fact of the importation of corn from England could not be evaded, but the commercial leaders were possessed with a terror of Irish rivalry, which could not be exorcised. The bill was at last transmitted, but a clause had been slipped in,<sup>2</sup> empowering the Council to suspend the premiums at their pleasure; and the House of Commons in disgust refused to take back a measure which had been mutilated into a mockery.

Re-introduced in 1719, under the viceroyalty of the Duke of Bolton, the bill met with a fate no better. The Duke, like his predecessors, gave it his warmest support. He showed that the objections of the Commissioners of Customs were childish. The proposed bounties were but half those which were actually given in England, and the relative prices in the two countries made the under-selling of the English by the Irish growers a complete impossibility.<sup>3</sup> The ineffectuality

<sup>1</sup> ‘The Lords Justices to Stanhope, May 22, 1716.’ *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> It had been done by some surreptitious manœuvre in Ireland itself after the heads left the House of Commons. ‘Duke of Bolton to Secretary Craggs, August 14, 1719.’ *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> ‘The price of corn is generally as high in Dublin as in London.

A bushel of English wheat is one-fifth heavier than Irish, and so with other grain. The bounties of the Irish bill are but half of those in England; so that it is impossible for the exporters of Irish corn to undersell the British, but directly contrary, for the Irish, though they have the premium desired, can never sell to the same advantage as the English, nor can

of an argument so conclusive showed that the avowed motive, bad as it was, yet was not the real one. Stanhope and Secretary Craggs gave an evasive answer, that the House of Commons in Ireland had already rejected the bill when it was offered them, and this time it was not returned at all.

Too inclined already to a passive acquiescence in the destiny which England was forcing on them, drawn by their immediate interests in the direction of the convenient sheep-breeding, which the contraband trade made so profitable, and 'driven,' as Swift bitterly described it, 'into barbarity for the sake of peace,'<sup>1</sup> the Irish gentlemen might have been excused if they had now given up the battle; and indeed each year saw the ranks thinning of those who still struggled against the destiny of the country. Many a landlord who, with good examples round him, and in a wholesome social atmosphere, would have lived usefully and honourably, and have made Ireland the better for his presence, was sinking down into a drinking, swearing, duel fighting, scandalous being. But the few who refused to despair fought manfully on; and, eight years later, though direct encouragement they could obtain none, yet after a famine, in which thousands of the peasantry had died, they did succeed in wringing out of the English Council a consent that the prohibitory

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even expect markets but when corn is so very scarce and dear in England that they cannot be supplied from thence.'—'Duke of Bolton to Secretary Craggs, August 14, 1719.' *MSS. Record Office.*  
<sup>1</sup> Tracts on Irish affairs. *Swift's Works*, vol. vii.

clauses in the leases should be cancelled, and that in every farm a certain small portion should be under the plough. After a great potato failure, when the roads were covered with starving beggars, and in every cabin there was one dead or dying, the Irish Parliament did at length, in the year 1728, obtain thus much in the way of concession. And even this poor instalment of justice and common sense they owed less to themselves than to the intercession of Archbishop Boulter, who, though unable to persuade his brother prelates to consent to the emancipation of the Dissenters, succeeded in persuading the Duke of Newcastle that, to condemn the Irish to recurring famine, was neither safe nor wise.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Primate to the Duke of Newcastle, March 7, 1728.' *MSS.* Record Office. I quote from the original. Boulter was an English Whig, and had been Bishop of Bristol. He succeeded Lindsay as Primate in 1724, and was, for many years, the chief adviser of the English Government in Irish affairs. He is evil spoken of in patriotic histories as the upholder of the English interest, and the advocate of the promotion of Englishmen to Irish offices. His prejudice in favour of his countrymen was owing simply to the inveterate wrong-headedness in Church matters of the Irish clergy and men of rank. His main object, of which he never lost sight, was the repeal of the Test Act. His advice on matters of state, whether England followed it or not, was always on the side of liberality and justice. Archbishop though he was, he was free from the cant of his profession. Yet his practical excellence would have gained him credit had it been found in a person more spiritually-minded, as the visible fruit of doctrinal piety. In the famine of 1741 he fed thousands of the Dublin poor with meal for many weeks at his single expense, spending, as a brother bishop wonderingly said, 'no less than 25*l.* a day.'—'The Bishop of Dromore to —, April 18, 1741.' *Ibid.*

## SECTION VI.

BUT neither can the history of Ireland be understood, nor can the conduct of the English Government on the one hand, and that of the Protestant Colony on the other, be equitably judged, without a knowledge of the conditions and habits of another section of the Irish people. The representatives of the great Catholic families who preserved their estates, under the Articles of Galway and Limerick, had either sold them and gone abroad, and were serving in the French or Spanish armies, or had conformed to the Establishment, or else had taken shelter from the penal laws behind some Protestant friend or kinsman, and had escaped molestation by withdrawing into privacy. In Ireland itself, few or no Catholic gentlemen of high birth or connexion cared to put themselves forward in situations which would draw attention to their humiliation, and they preferred the repose of dignified seclusion to noisy or complaining agitation. The names of men like Lord Antrim, Lord Kenmare, Lord Fingal, Lord Athenry, or Sir Stephen Rice, are unheard of in scenes such as those which I am about to describe. But there was a rank below them, men of moderate property, small squires or squireens; large middlemen, holding long leases; scattered over all the country—Catholics in reality, if affecting Protestantism to escape the inconveniences attaching to their faith:

again there were sons and grandsons of the old families, who had been dispossessed under the Act of Settlement, still calling themselves gentlemen, too proud to work, too poor to live honourably without it; all together forming a section of society the least reputable, the least manageable, the least worthy in a human or intelligible sense of any class perhaps calling itself civilized in the known world. These were the men who, in old times, had formed the retinues of the robber chiefs, or had sought for glory and the praise of bards and harpers, by driving their neighbours' cows, or burning down their neighbours' haggards. These were the men who, in the long desperate struggle of the Irish leaders to keep at bay the growing rule of England, had fought at the side of Shan O'Neil, or Desmond, or Tyrone; and when the English sword proved at last the sharpest, had earned pardon and reward by bringing their comrades' heads in bloody sacksful to the conquerors. These were the men who, when the Lords of the Pale, and the Earls of Ormond and Antrim would have taken Ireland out of the hands of the Parliamentarians, and sought redress of their wrongs by loyalty to their lawful King, stained an honourable if mistaken cause with innocent blood, and made the name of Irish rebellion for ever infamous by the massacre of 1641. These were the men who, when the ten infernal years of civil war were ended in confiscation and forfeiture, avenged the wrongs of their bleeding country by midnight murders as Rapparees and Tories, or else as cosherers were not ashamed to

be fed in idleness and vice by the tenants of the lands which they had lost. These too are the same men whom we have known in later years, either as the spendthrifts who still lived by robbery in the shape of debts which they could never pay; as the hard riders, gamblers, drunkards, duellists; the rakes of Mallow, the half savage, half humorous Irish blackguards that figure in the legends of the first years of the <sup>1727</sup> present century, as the professional political agitators, as the place-hunters under the disguise of patriots, the heroes of the tragi-comedy of the cabbage-garden, or the Fenians of the raid of the 'Red River.'

Of such men as these, all of them essential children of anarchy, recruited by idle younger brothers, disreputable members of otherwise honourable families, landless heads of attainted houses, who lived in dreams of a free Irish Parliament, and of re-instatement in their old domains, there were always many thousands in Ireland, who formed an element perpetually active for evil. Had industry been allowed to grow, and to bring with it, as it must have brought, order and law, and steady occupation, they would have disappeared before civilization like the Red Indians, or like the wild animals of the forest. In the wretchedness to which Ireland was degraded, they throve as in their natural element.

Arthur Young has drawn their portraits as he saw them in 1770:—

'I must now come,' he says, 'to a class of persons to whose conduct it is almost entirely owing, that the



character of that nation has not that lustre abroad which it will soon merit. This is the class of little country gentlemen, tenants who drink their claret by means of profit rents, jobbers in farms, bucks, your fellows with round hats edged with gold, who hunt in the day, get drunk in the evening, and fight the next morning. These are the men among whom drinking, wrangling, quarrelling, fighting, ravishing, &c., are found as in their native soil.’<sup>1</sup>

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona.

These gentlemen were flourishing in full vigour under Queen Anne and the first George. Pictures of them, more or less accurate, can be put together out of the records in Dublin Castle, and they and their doings will form the subject of the following book.

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<sup>1</sup> YOUNG’S *Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii. Appendix, p. 113.

## BOOK III.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### IRISH IDEAS.

##### SECTION I.

WHEN the Pretender attempted a descent on Scotland in 1708 and the French fleet was to have come to Galway to make a diversion in Ireland in his favour, preparations had been made for an extensive Catholic rising throughout Connaught. The Scotch expedition failed. The French did not show themselves on the Irish coast. The exclusion of the Presbyterians from the militia, had given the intending insurgents a tempting opportunity; but the Catholics knew that, unless supported by corresponding movements elsewhere, even if successful at the beginning, they would have to deal once more with the whole strength of England; and they were too prudent to risk another desperate struggle single-handed. But though their hopes were quenched for the moment, the purpose was not abandoned. In 1711, when the Tory ministers came into power, the Pretender's chances seemed again favourable. Rumours

of a restoration were flying fast and thick in the Irish air. Large companies of friars were reported as riding through the Western counties from village to village, telling the people 'that the ould abbeys were about to be set up again.' There were 'more of them than had been seen for many years.' They were well-dressed and well mounted, mysterious apparitions, risking the dangers of the law for some unascertained purpose, yet creating, wherever they went, the vague ferment of excitement and expectation of change.<sup>1</sup> They had found the benefit in the last war of having Connaught entirely to themselves. Estates there had been bought in the interval by English speculators, who had intruded themselves into Roscommon, Mayo, and even Connemara itself. Encouraged by these neighbours, more than one of the old Galway families had deserted the national cause, turned Protestant, and gone over to the enemy. If there was to be another rebellion, a first step towards success would be to purge the country both of the home renegades and these dangerous aliens. Political speculations were reinforced by agrarian grudges, which created instruments ready made to the hand.

Between the scanty half-savage inhabitants of wild districts, who claim a right to land which they will not cultivate, and civilized men who desire to make a rational use of it, there is always an irreconcilable feud. The improver buys an estate, with a population

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<sup>1</sup> 'Miscellaneous Depositions, 1711. Co. Roscommon.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

who have lived upon it from immemorial time in their own barbarous way. He perceives that, with more intelligent treatment, he can treble the value of his purchase, and raise the condition of his tenants by compelling them to work. They have no desire to be raised. They deny his right to meddle with them. He clears them off, and introduces others who will do as he tells them; and there is at once war—war in which each side believes that justice is on its side, war which can end only in the extermination of one or the other party. The English settlers had taken possession of vast tracts of mountains, built enclosures, raised stocks of sheep and black cattle, and established Scotch herdsmen, necessarily in exposed situations, to take charge of them. Gentlemen of the old blood—Sir Walter Blake especially—were following the example, adopting English habits, and, still worse, the English creed. Before the example spread, or the new system took deeper root, the Irish determined to make an end of it.

The campaign opened in Eyre Connaught, a part of Connemara. In the early winter of 1711, large armed parties in white shirts traversed the country in the long nights, 'houghing and destroying the cattle belonging to persons who were unacceptable to the Irish as having taken lands to farm.'<sup>1</sup> From Eyre Connaught the movement spread with the mysterious rapidity of a plan carefully concerted. It swept along

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<sup>1</sup> 'Petition to the Duke of Ormond from twenty Gentlemen of Galway, Nov. 1711.' MSS. Dublin.

Lough Corrib and Lough Mask, through Mayo, past Castlebar to Sligo; then down through Roscommon and Galway, and south into Clare. Notices were dropped at the shepherds' cottages, or were nailed against the doors, informing them that war was declared against the stockmaster, that it would be continued till the stock was destroyed, and bidding them stir at their peril. All night long would be heard the roaring of the wretched cattle, as they fell under the knife; wild cries, and 'volleys of shots from bogs and mountains, and the huzzas of the Houghers.'<sup>1</sup> If the settlers or their servants ventured out, they found their houses burning when they returned. At day-break the hill-sides were seen strewn with carcasses of oxen and sheep lying dead in hundreds or in thousands. The bands by whom the slaughter was accomplished seemed to have started from the earth. Nothing could be traced to the local peasantry. They professed mere ignorance, amazement, and terror. It was found only that, wherever a butchery had taken place, they were gathered in crowds on the morning following to buy the bodies, which the owners were glad to dispose of at any price which they could get. The warning letters were signed 'Evan;' but who Evan was none could guess, for he was omnipresent in four counties. Here and there suspected persons were arrested, but no evidence could be found against them. The story which they generally told was, that the gangs at work

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<sup>1</sup> 'Edward Crowe to the Bishop of Cloyne, February 7, 1712.' *MSS.* Dublin. 'Sir William Caulfield to Secretary Dawson, February 16.' *Ibid.*

were 'King James's old soldiers,' and that the object was to harass Connaught 'till an army could arrive which they expected from France.' Beyond question it was the work of Catholics, for Protestants were the only sufferers. But whether it was really a prelude to a rebellion, whether it was an agrarian attack on the grazing system, or whether it was revenge for the passing of the penal laws, no certain conclusion could be arrived at. The accounts of the attitude of the priests were contradictory. There was no doubt that they knew the perpetrators, and as little that they would tell nothing. Sir William Caulfield, who hated them, confessed that he could find no proof of their guilt. They would have preferred, naturally enough, he said, to see people on the land instead of stock; but in words, so far as he could hear, 'they had condemned the barbarous method by which the ground was being cleared.' Priests at Tuam, on the other hand, had been heard to pray 'for Evan's good success.' An Augustinian friar, at Kilmore, had desired all his congregation to join with him in imploring a blessing on Evan's head. Another father had read one of Evan's proclamations in the pulpit, and preached a sermon in his praise as the poor man's friend.<sup>1</sup> The High Sheriff of Galway arrested Dr. Maddin, the priest of Loughrea, as one of the ringleaders. The mob rose in fury, surrounded the house where the priest was confined, and would have torn the sheriff in pieces but for the appearance of a troop of dragoons.

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<sup>1</sup> 'George Fowler to the Archbishop of Tuam, March 3, 1712.' MSS. Dublin.

The original mystery was never completely unravelled. The English landowners were few and widely scattered. The rising was so sudden, the surprise so complete, and the destruction so universal, that they were unable to combine or collect at any one point sufficient force to attack the houghing parties at their work. They had to lie still behind barricaded doors, and congratulate themselves that the attack this time was on their property and not upon their lives.

On one occasion only a gang was fallen in with, which showed that the work was directed by men of intelligence and education.

At the end of November, 1711, a soldier belonging to the garrison, who was shooting near Galway, was stopped by a number of men with blackened faces, who took his gun from him. He observed that they all spoke English. The leader wore several heavy gold rings. He produced from his pocket a handsome chased flask and drank some wine from it. He had a bag full of Spanish coin, a handful of which he offered his prisoner, promising that if he would join the band he would make a gentleman of him. Apparently he was one of the better born Rapparees, with the courtesies of his profession ; for when the soldier declined his offers, he gave him back his gun, saying that he had more arms already than he needed, and bidding him go tell the Governor of Galway that, if the garrison meddled with him, he would burn the town to the gates, hough the soldiers as he had done the cattle, and carry the officers' heads away on pikes.'

The vast area of country which was wasted proves

that the devastation was the work of many hands. Very few of the perpetrators were detected, and still fewer were punished. One or two were executed. Others, though caught red-handed, were acquitted by the juries. Throughout Connaught the Irish Catholic gentry combined to prevent any effective prosecution or discovery; and, if innocent themselves, they proved that their sympathies were entirely on the side of those whom they knew to be guilty. To stop the destruction, and, if possible, unravel the mystery, the Government at length offered a free pardon to all who would confess and give securities for future good behaviour. The Houghers' object was substantially accomplished. Terror had done its work. Connaught was recovered to the Irish for half a century, for no stock breeders would risk their capital for mere industrial use in a country where it could be thus swept away with impunity, and those who remained fell, for protection, into Irish habits, and reared their sheep for the smuggling wool trade, which the native ordinances were pleased to permit. Sixteen young gentlemen in Galway then gave in their names, having nothing to fear, and nothing more to lose. The most substantial and most respected of the Irish proprietors of the West became bail for them.<sup>1</sup> One of a similar

<sup>1</sup> List of persons that rendered themselves as Houghers in the county of Galway, pursuant to the proclamation, and entered into recognizances under John Stanton, Esq. :—

Martin MacDonogh, of Ballydaly

Darby O'Flaherty  
 Bryan King  
 James Naghten  
 Denis Fahy  
 John McMoyle Burke  
 James Caheron  
 Daniel Grany



party in Clare, who surrendered under the proclamation, volunteered a detailed account of the proceedings. Connor O'Loghlin, son of Rory O'Loghlin, a Catholic gentleman of good birth and station, said that his cousin, Captain Charles O'Loghlin, after making him take an oath of secrecy, invited him to join 'in houghing the cattle of the merchants and new-comers that were engrossing the lands.' He, his cousin, and seven or eight companions, made up the gang. They did not confine themselves to the settlers, for the first object of their attentions was one of the purest Milesians in Ireland, Sir Donogh O'Brien, who was a Protestant. Sir Donogh, on second thoughts, they concluded not to meddle with. He was capable of 'summoning all the priests in the country,' demanding an account from them of the doings of their parishioners, and afterwards 'of taking account with such.' Sir Walter Blake was a safer victim. They killed three hundred 'great rams and wethers' on Sir Walter Blake's estate; afterwards, armed with guns and swords, they stole away at night by bridle-paths into the Galway mountains, took up their quarters at a friend's house, where they were handsomely entertained; and, after a day or two of feasting and hard

Nicholas Supple  
 Bryan Morris  
 Richard Kearigane  
 Richard Pearle  
 Herbert O'Flaherty  
 Francis Murphy  
 John Armstrong  
 Henry Joyce

All these persons were gentlemen,

and entered into recognizances—  
 100*l.* each for themselves, and their  
 securities 50*l.* each.

Among the gentlemen who became bail for them I find the names of Edmund McDonogh, Bryan Flaherty, Godfrey Daly, Robert Blake, and Edmund Burke. *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

drinking, went to their work again, and cleared the adjoining farms.<sup>1</sup> The careless recklessness of the party showed how needless was disguise, how completely they felt themselves secure in the sympathy of the county.<sup>2</sup>

For the present the work was effectually done. No cattle-farmer remained in the West save those who consented to submit to the laws and customs of Connaught. The lesson was repeated when necessary. Forty years later Lord St. George attempted to plant a part of Connemara with Protestant families, building them decent houses, barns, stalls, and cattle-sheds. No Catholic tenants appear to have been removed to make way for them; but the mere presence of these heretical strangers was intolerable. The Houghers rose, levelled houses and outbuildings, swearing that no Protestant should settle in the district. In this instance the guiding hand could be traced with certainty. 'The priests,' wrote a gentleman on the spot, 'told the people they were contending for the Holy Catholic religion.'<sup>3</sup>

Later yet, and falling into a lower circle, the Houghers became identified with the Whiteboys, and spread over the four provinces. Unable to shake off their enemies by open force, they could at least make

<sup>1</sup> 'Information of Connor O'Loghlin, sworn before Robert Miller, Justice of the Peace, 1713.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> The deposition ends with the statement of young O'Loghlin, that all the aforesaid persons—Captain O'Loghlin, Lieutenant Markahan,

Ensign Connor Hogan, William Kempsey, Bryan Hogan, &c. — were 'Papists to his certain knowledge.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Anthony Miles to the Earl of Kildare, July 30, 1757.' *Church MSS.* Dublin Castle.

the land, which the Protestants had usurped, a barren possession to its new owners.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following proclamation is a specimen of the literary capabilities of the later Houghers, men of inferior station to the O'Loghlins of Clare, but showing traces of the classical education given in the hedge schools:—

'Hougherstown, Co. Wexford,  
July, 1779.

'Isaac Cullimore,

'We, the undernamed persons, doth insert these lines here to give you notice that we are still in very good health, thanks be to God! and doth intend to see justice and equality rectified in our barony, though much oppressed by domineering Quakers. So we dance with joy, and reason we have to see your brother John the Atheist inhumed, and likewise doth determine to pay the doleful Reedstown a triumphing visit once more—and, that before this day sennight, and please God, to hough, maim, and slain the oxen which are in your possession on said lands under the protection of M. M., and will erect an altar on said lands, and offer them as victims to the Infernal Gods, who will conduce him with security into Charons custody, who, in his magnificent boat, will transport him over the river Styx into Plutos region, and Devil speed him and all the precedents of his infernal generation.

'So we suppose that you thought we to have been dead, and to have entirely omitted our ancient cus-

toms—we have been obscure this time past and on that account you have sent down cattle and afterwards a herd to produce benefit out of said lands. But as long as the Almighty God will leave us breath to draw, you shall never reap the value of one farthing out of the above-mentioned farm. So, Isaac, we take the more easy way to conduce you to the state of obtaining God's grace, and to come in unity with your friends and neighbours. So, when we will transact this precedent matter, if you do not become more tranquil and mild, you shall quickly be dispatched, and shall be dismissed to a D. T. S., who will punish and smash you according to your cruelty to your clients in the parish of Tacumshaw.

'And likewise, if you do not desist from taking lands, and give up them farms which you have in the said parish, Isaac nor his family shall be no more, and Neemstown in like manner shall become a Reedstown.

'So your inimical antagonists remain in good health,

'John Hougher, Peter Burnstack, Phil Slasher, Patrick Fearnot, Column Kill, Sylvester Quaker-rouser, Edmund Smart, Edward Stout, and several others too laborious to insert.

'This to infernal Isaac Cullimore, of Neemstown, Wexford.'  
MSS. Dublin Castle.

SECTION II.<sup>1</sup>

THE immunity from ordinary crime, which so honourably distinguishes modern Ireland, was no characteristic of its condition in the last century. To settle differences by fighting had been ingrained, by many centuries of unbroken habit, into the temper of the people. When private wars and forays were no longer possible, duelling took their place, and was so frequent and deadly, that it was proposed, at one time, to make the survivor responsible for the maintenance of his victim's family. Duelling, and the strange forms which it assumed, will be treated of in a future chapter. At present, the reader's attention is to be

<sup>1</sup> I leave this section almost as I wrote it, because it contains nothing but what is true. The facts which I have related are taken from the records in Dublin Castle. From the records I have only taken specimens, and the practice was far more common than even the records shew. The Roman Catholics were not the only offenders. The Act of Parliament which I quoted speaks of degraded clergymen officiating on such occasions as well as priests. There were blackguards enough of both creeds in Ireland, and this book is not written to cover the sins of the Protestants. It is also true that England and Scotland were disgraced by similar atrocities. But they were on a scale in Ire-

land far beyond what could be found in any other part of the civilized world.

'Ireland,' says Arthur Young in 1776, 'is the only country in Europe where associations among men of fortune are necessary for apprehending ravishers. It is scarcely credible how many young women, even in late years, have been carried off and ravished in order, as they have generally fortunes, to gain the appearance of a voluntary marriage.'

Ireland also was the only country where the ravishers were protected from punishment by the sympathy of the people.

There is no evidence that the Catholic bishops ever exerted

called to acts of violence of another and yet more remarkable kind, which, like duelling, were sanctioned by public opinion; and, notwithstanding repeated efforts of the Irish Parliament, were practically shielded from punishment. The Houghers revenged the wrongs of their country by mere destruction. Another set of young gentlemen of both religious persuasions were in the habit of recovering equivalents for the lands of which they considered themselves to have been robbed, or of making their fortunes on easy terms, by carrying off young girls of good condition to the mountains, ravishing them with the most exquisite brutality, and then compelling them to go through a form of marriage, which a priest or parson in attendance was ready to celebrate. The High Church party in the English and Irish Governments could not bring themselves to treat a sacrament as invalid however irregularly performed, and the unfortunate victims were thus driven, in the majority of instances, to make the best of their situation, and accept the fate from which there was no legal escape. In vain Parliament passed bill upon bill making abduction felony, and threatening penalties of the harshest kind against the officiating ecclesiastics. So long as the marriages themselves were regarded as binding, the families injured preferred to cover their disgrace, and refused

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themselves to check the practice, and the discipline in which the inferior clergy was held by their superiors implies that they could have checked it had they cared to	do so. The bishops of the Anglican Church were active in the wrong direction, to prevent a legislative remedy.
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to prosecute. The heroes of these performances were often highly connected. Political influence was brought to bear for them, and when convicted, which was extremely seldom, the Crown pardoned them.<sup>1</sup> The priests, secure in the protection of the people, laughed at penalties which existed only on paper, and it was said encouraged practices which brought converts to the Faith, and put money in their own pockets.<sup>2</sup> High sheriffs, magistrates, and grand juries took their cue from the Castle, and hesitated to embroil themselves with their Catholic neighbours when they knew that they would not be supported. If occasionally, in indignation at some exceptionally furious outrage, they attempted to exert themselves, the faint assistance which they were allowed even from the army, when there were troops in the neighbourhood, taught them that in future their safest course was to remain passive. A remarkable instance occurred in Tipperary in 1754. A young lady had been carried off and violated with the usual brutalities. She escaped to her

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Young says that there was but one instance on record, where a person guilty of forcible abduction had been executed. This was probably James Cotter, whose case will be presently mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Commons allege,' I believe with truth, 'that the priests direct their people to marry Protestants, as experience shows that, in those cases, the whole family become Papists.'—'The Duke of Devonshire to the Duke of New-

castle, December 25, 1743.' 'We have reason to believe the priests are, in a great measure, supported by gratuities on occasion of such marriages as are made void by this bill.'—'Memorandum of the Irish Council on sending to England "the Heads of a Bill to make more effectual an Act to prevent the taking away and marrying children against the wishes of their parents and guardians."'—MSS. Dublin Castle, 1745.

relations; the priest who married her was taken and identified; and the lady was bound over to prosecute at Limerick. Mr. Lovitt, the high sheriff, undertook to convey the prisoner thither from Clonmel. There were several companies of soldiers in the town, and he applied to the commanding officer for an escort. The officer said that his orders were in no case to grant more than a corporal's guard. He would give him twelve men and no more. The high sheriff in vain insisted that five times as many would not carry a priest through Tipperary as a prisoner, if his life was supposed to be in danger. The officer had his instructions from Dublin, and could not exceed them. Three thousand people gathered on the road. They stopped and searched every coach and chair that passed, to find the lady whom they meant to murder to silence her evidence. The sheriff's party was attacked, the under-sheriff was half-killed, the soldiers were beaten and dispersed, and the priest was rescued; while such was the general rage at the affront to the sacred person of this reverend gentleman, that Mr. Damer wrote to the Secretary that no Protestant in the country, who slept in a thatched house, dared speak or act in such matters.<sup>1</sup>

Violence and paralysis of authority will be called the consequence of unjust legislation. Had the Catholics been treated equitably, it may be said, they would have been orderly members of society. The answer is that crimes such as these were the normal growth of Ireland; they had descended from a

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<sup>1</sup> MSS. Dublin Castle. 1754.

time when Protestantism was an unknown word, and Popery and Irish ideas were supreme in the land. They were the native growth of the soil, which yielded only to higher culture where the English sword gave strength to English law. Abduction may mean any thing, between the escape of romantic lovers from the tyranny of parents, and the most villanous of imaginable atrocities. A few stories taken almost at random from the mass of depositions suffice to show that, under any circumstances and under any conceivable form of civilized government, the performers in them, principals and accessories, secular and spiritual, could have been only fit for the gallows. These outrages were no deeds of stealthy revenge upon oppressors by men whom injustice had driven mad. They were acts of war done in open day, in the face of the whole people, and supported by their sympathy.

A common and comparatively harmless specimen is to be found in the deposition of Mr. Armstrong, a Tipperary clergyman: 'Mr. Armstrong said that, in the midst of divine service in the forenoon of June 6, 1756, Henry Grady, with several ruffians, arrived with a blunderbuss, guns, pistols, and other arms, came into the church of the town of Tipperary, and, with their arms cocked and presented, called out that none should offer to stir, that if any offered to stir from their seats they would shoot. The said Grady advanced up the aisle with a cocked pistol presented in his hand; on which the informant went from the reading desk, spoke to said Grady, and entreated him to retire



and desist. On which he retired once or twice to the door, and then advanced with two of his accomplices, who were not known by the informant ; but one had a gun cocked in his hands, and swore he would shoot the informant, and the other had a gun in one hand and a hanger drawn in the other, with which he struck the informant on the arm, and cut through the surplice and gown. Immediately after Grady and one of the said persons went into the pew in which Miss Susannah Grove sate, and carried her off by force. Most or all the ruffians who were armed retired with  
1741 their arms presented, and their faces towards the congregation, till they came to the church door, which they locked, and carried off the key. . .<sup>1</sup>

Personal passion rarely or never shows in these brutal stories. Young girls were not the only victims. Elizabeth Dobbin, a wealthy widow, at Belfast, sixty-two years old, was one night seized in her bed, dragged downstairs, flung upon a car, which was waiting in the street, and conducted by an armed party to a house in Carrickfergus. A priest was introduced dressed as a beggar. One of the ravishers presented himself as the intended husband, who answered her agonized entreaties to be spared by a threat that, if she refused to marry him, 'he would tear her limb from limb.' She was then stripped and violated, one of the confederates 'standing the while at the bedside with a drawn sword in his hand.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MSS. Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> 'Case of Elizabeth Dobbin, March 2, 1741.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

Catherinc Stackpoole, another elderly widow of good fortune, living in Cork, was disturbed in her sleep by a clamour at her door. On rising to enquire the meaning of the disturbance, she found herself <sup>1757</sup> in the arms of Mr. Austin Fitzgerald, a gentleman of unblemished Geraldine descent. Fitzgerald hurried her down the stairs, tied her on a horse in her night-gown, and galloped off with her to the nearest mountains with a dozen young fellows as his escort. She was taken down at a lonely cabin, and compelled, under the same threats of instant death, to go through a form of marriage. A priest, ready prepared, presented himself, said a few words, and declared the ceremony complete. Fitzgerald was then left alone in possession of his prize. A desperate struggle followed, a scene indescribable here though laid accurately in all its details before the Castle authorities. The bridegroom ultimately took flight, bitten, scratched, and torn. The woman escaped in the darkness, made her way back to Cork, and at a cost of 500*l.* to herself succeeded in bringing Fitzgerald to trial. He was convicted on the clearest evidence and was sentenced to death. The execution was delayed. Applications for pardon were put in by his relations. The high-spirited lady wrote with her own hand to the Duke of Devonshire, who was then viceroy, relating her story, and insisting on justice being done. The Duke gave her fair words, but month followed month, and no warrant came down to send Fitzgerald to the scaffold. At length the outraged woman died of her injuries, and

the Duke of Bedford, who had succeeded to the government, recommended the ravisher to the mercy of the Crown <sup>1</sup>

Let the reader understand that the cases which came before the courts were but a fraction of those which shame and dread of notoriety kept concealed, and that universally there were the same accompaniments of unmanly brutality, and he will form some notion of this aspect of Irish life in the last century.<sup>2</sup>

A family of Protestants, named Keris, were settled on a farm in Clare. The father and mother were in prosperous circumstances. They had a single daughter named Honor, a girl of fourteen, who was the heiress of their wealth. One afternoon in March 1733,<sup>1733</sup> two gentlemen, a Mr. Thomas Lucas and a Mr. Edmond Stock, came to the Kerises' house; and intimated that some acquaintances of theirs, one of the O'Loghlin's, perhaps the Hougher, and a certain William Blood, intended to break into their house that night and carry Honor to the hills. The object of the visit was to frighten the mother, and to induce her to allow them to remain to protect her and her child. The wolves had stolen in in the shape of watch-dogs. There were no police in those days. At nine o'clock in the evening the door was burst open. Blood with two companions rushed into the room where the family were sitting, struck the father to the ground with a bludgeon, and looked round for his victim. At the first alarm she

<sup>1</sup> 'Case of Catherine Stackpoole, 1757.' *MSS. Ireland.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> See note, p. 664.

had flown upstairs. Blood proceeded to search the house with a candle in one hand and a pistol in the other, saying that he would shoot anyone that stirred. He found the child cowering in the corner of a loft, brought her down fainting, and swore he would carry her away dead or alive. The wretched mother flung her arms about her. The ruffian seized the mother by the throat, and, with an oath, dashed her to the ground. The gentlemen who had stood by, affecting terror, threw open the windows, and bade the girl spring out, where there were confederates waiting to seize her. The women-servants now ran in to help their mistress. The brave young fellows set upon them with their sticks, and beat and mangled them till they fell on the floor. The father lay stunned and senseless; the mother's clothes were torn from her back; and, amidst curses and yells of triumph, Honor Keris was dragged to the door, flung upon a horse like a sack, and borne away in the moonlight. The ravishers stopped at a cabin a mile and a half distant to let her recover her senses. There the mother, who had followed screaming along the road, came up with them. She found her daughter shivering with cold and terror, and implored them, in the name of mercy, if they would not give her up, yet to let her rest for the night where she was. That was not in the bargain, one of them cried, snatched her up, tossed her back on the saddle, and set off again at a gallop. By rare fortune this girl was saved. The father, having recovered his senses, and finding himself alone, made his way to the house of a

Mr. Ross Lewin, an English magistrate in the neighbourhood. Lewin mounted half a dozen of his servants, went off in pursuit, and overtook the ravishers before they could reach the mountains. The young gentlemen did not care to face Lewin's pistols; they dropped their prey, insolently saying, however, as they rode off, that they would have her again some day, and Lewin's own daughter besides.<sup>1</sup>

Each magistrate depended on his own resources to enforce the law. The parties were well known; they did not even care to conceal their identity; but there was no force available to arrest them. The Keris family lived in nightly fear of a new attack — of finding their home in flames, or their cattle houghed. But no one was punished. Authority was as powerless in Clare, as in the days of the chiefs. Law, indeed, all over Ireland was a phantom, which few had cause to fear who dared defy it. Anarchy, not tyranny, was Ireland's scourge; and the medicine which she needed was not concession, but the forgotten hand of Cromwell.

Escape on these occasions was the exception. Almost always successful outrage was carried to the utmost limit of enormity.

Rebecca White was an orphan girl residing in her own house, on her own property at Cappagh, in Tipperary. As such she was a tempting prey to the young blades and bucks of the neighbourhood. An

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<sup>1</sup> *Dublin MSS.* Dublin Castle. 1733.

uncle lived with her as guardian, but was a poor protector. On a dark night, in the middle of the winter of 1718-19, three Fitzgeralds, a William <sup>1719</sup> Brien, and several other persons, all described as gentlemen, armed to the teeth, with swords, guns, and pistols, swooped down on Cappagh. The door was broken open. The women who, knowing the object of the visit, threw themselves in the way, were knocked down and kicked into quietness. Rebecca White was torn out of bed in her shift, dashed against the wall to stupefy her, and to make her easier to handle, and was then borne away many miles, to an empty police barrack, among the bogs on the edge of county Limerick. The key of the house was found, and the door opened. A young unregistered priest came forward as usual ready to perform the sacrament, and the whole party then surrounded their prisoner, who had partially recovered from her swoon, and deliberately told her in a manner evidently serious, that, unless she consented to marry one of the Fitzgeralds, they would all violate her in turn, and then murder her.

With this announcement ringing in her ears, she was carried upstairs to what was called the officer's room. The priest followed and began to read. Terrified as she was she still resisted and forbade him to go on. He said that if he stopped he would be killed. He asked her if she would be Fitzgerald's wife. It was like asking the lamb, with the butcher's knife at its throat, if it would be slaughtered. The marriage

was declared to be complete. The victim was left to her ravisher; and her wild shrieks wrung some ineffectual pity from the wretches who were listening to her agonies.<sup>1</sup>

The reader is requested to understand that he has before him, in these stories, an account of real facts which happened not much more than a hundred years ago, in a country constitutionally governed by English law, under the English Crown. The evidence is the sworn deposition of the sufferers themselves, and of such other witnesses as could be prevailed on to give their testimony. Human creatures have at various times made devils of themselves, but, probably, no age, and no part of the world, have produced specimens quite so detestable as these Irish gentlemen. In unmanliness, in cowardice, in ferocity, in a combination of all the qualities most hateful and despicable in man's nature, they had achieved a distinction as yet unmatched. Yet such was the condition of Irish public opinion, their performances were so much in favour with general society, that they were allowed to escape retribution. When all is said, the desire of England to place the responsibilities attached to landed tenure in safer hands was not indefensible, nor were the objections unnatural to the intrusion into the country of men calling themselves priests, who were willing to lend themselves to such atrocious and accursed acts of infamy.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Deposition of Rebecca White.' MSS. Dublin Castle. 1719.

A combination of superstition with deliberate villany has been many times observed in Catholic countries. The brigand chief, who has cut a throat in the morning, and burnt a village in the afternoon, will go through his evening devotions at the shrine of the Madonna with the ardour of unaffected piety. A similar curious anxiety was at times displayed for the soul of some outraged Protestant woman by men whom, unless for the purpose of incurring merited damnation for their unpunished wickedness on earth, it would be difficult to credit with the possession of souls themselves.

Among the wealthy yeomen of Cavan was a certain Walter Tubman, residing near Carrigaline, who had an only daughter named Jane. On a forenoon in November, 1730, her father, mother, and brothers being absent at the neighbouring fair, and no one being at home but Jane Tubman, her cousin Margaret, and some servants, a young Edmund McKiernan, an unwelcome acquaintance, lounged in, and after a few jests, to which he received no answer, he caught hold of Jane, and told her she must go with him. McKiernan was apparently alone. There were other houses within call. The woman flung open the door, thrust her arm into the staple, and shouted for help. McKiernan, unable to move her, swore if she did not withdraw her arm he would break it. Immediately after she found herself in the grasp of half-a-dozen powerful men, dragged into the road, and flung across a horse's back. She was an unusually strong



girl. She clutched at their hair and pulled it off in handfuls. She tore their shirts open. Half-a-dozen times she threw herself on the ground, to be tossed back upon the horse with execrations: one of the men at length held her on by force, another thrust his hand into her mouth, and when she made her teeth meet through his fingers, a third gagged her with a handkerchief. At length senseless and exhausted, the blood streaming from her nose, she lay swooning on the saddle. The party then divided. Five fell behind to prevent pursuit, and turned back the farm-servants, who had followed to rescue their young mistress. McKiernan and two others went on with their victim over bogs and curraghs, till they arrived late at night at the cabin of a widow Kilkenny deep in the mountains. Sick, faint, and hoarse, covered with blood, bruised and wounded in many places, the unhappy girl was here lifted off and carried in, and McKiernan at once, and without a moment's respite, told her she must prepare to be his wife on the instant. Dreadful as her condition was her spirit did not fail her. She said he might murder her if he so pleased; she would rather die than submit to his purpose.

The widow, pretending compassion, affected to interpose. She said that no harm should befall the poor creature that night; she should sleep with her own daughter; the door should be locked, and McKiernan should not come near her. She believed the old wretch, as she had no choice but to believe. In a romance she would have found a real protector,

and before morning deliverance would have come. Reality is more cruel than imagination. She had no sooner thrown herself exhausted on the bed, than the door was burst open; McKiernan rushed in, flung the other woman out of the room, bound Jane Tubman hand and foot, and then mercilessly violated her.

When she recovered consciousness in the morning she found herself surrounded by a gang of desperadoes, all Papists, and, as presently appeared, Papists who attended to their religious duties. They told her that they were McKiernan's guards, and that a hundred men should not take her from them. For a week she was carried from place to place, never resting two nights under the same roof. At the end of it 'an old dirty fellow' was introduced, 'with a long beard, and in his hand a string of beads.' She was made to stand up, McKiernan holding her, while the priest repeated a few words in Latin, and then said that she was lawfully married. With admirable spirit she still defied both of them; her body was in their power, but her will and conscience were still her own; and she sternly refused to make her chain more easy by consenting to wear it. Her father and her father's friends would find her yet, she said, and would see them all punished.

Unless her father was strong enough to inflict the punishment with his own hand, McKiernan knew, unfortunately but too well, that from Irish justice he had nothing to fear. 'Damn your father's soul,' he coolly said. 'If you escape and go back to your

friends, I'll burn your father's house over his head, and take you away again.'

There was a chapel at no great distance from the place where she was last detained; McKiernan and his guards were punctual in their attendance at mass; and, with a laudable zeal for her soul, tried to persuade her to go with them. 'Damn you, you little bitch,' was the beautiful exhortation of these pious children of Holy Church, 'not one of your profession will ever go to heaven.'

In the depth of her misery, the high-spirited Jane Tubman refused to allow others to run useless risks to save her. A woman named Susannah MacDowell, who appeared afterwards as a witness in the prosecution, offered to carry a message to her friends. Knowing how feeble was the Castle government; how unwilling to risk offending the Catholic mob, by assisting the magistrates to act vigorously; and fearing too that if her father interfered he might only expose himself to popular vengeance, she bade the woman go tell both him and her other relations that, for the present, they must stay at home, and keep quiet. McKiernan had sworn to her that, 'unless the magistrates sent a free pardon for himself and his men, damn his soul, her father and they should all sup sorrow.' 'Hitherto he had kept his people from doing them harm; but, damn him, he would keep them off no longer.'

At last, after three dreadful months, she stole away into the darkness one night, when McKiernan was off his guard, found her way over bogs and mountains to

a Protestant settlement, sent word to her father, and was taken home.<sup>1</sup> Her own story upon oath, the evidence of the servants who had witnessed her carrying off, and the evidence of the woman who had been with her in her captivity, were given before the magistrates of the county and forwarded to Dublin; but, as usual, there is no trace that, for the sake of a miserable Protestant girl, the Government thought it necessary to court a collision with Catholic public opinion.

Was the Irish Parliament to be blamed because they refused to believe that the tree on which such fruits grew had lost its old corruption? <sup>1720</sup> because they strove to uproot a system from the soil which shielded the most atrocious of crimes?

That the people approved of these accursed deeds, that they regarded an attempt to punish them as a tyrannical interference with their rights, appeared in a still more remarkable instance.

Sir James Cotter, of Anngrove, in the county of Cork, had commanded in chief for King James in Munster, during the wars of 1690-91. He had been governor of Cork city, had represented it in King James's Parliament, and was otherwise a distinguished adherent of the fallen dynasty. Though unprotected by the Articles of Limerick, he appears to have escaped attainder, and, dying in 1705, he was succeeded

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<sup>1</sup> 'Depositions of Jane Tubman, Susannah McDowell.' MSS. 1730  
Robert Linn of Killygar, Peter | Dublin Castle.  
McLoughlin, John Scott, and |

by his son, who, like his father, was the idol and darling of the Southern Catholics, and is represented, by the tenderness of history, as having fallen a victim to his devotion to the cause of the House of Stuart.<sup>1</sup> This brilliant cavalier possessed other claims besides loyalty to the Stuarts, for the bad elevation which he obtained. Being fifteen years old at his father's death, he was placed, in compliance with the Popery Act, under the guardianship of a Protestant relative, one of the Nettervilles. He was stolen away, however, by his Catholic friends, sent to England, educated in the orthodox faith, and afterwards, while still a minor, married to the daughter of George Mathews, a Catholic also.<sup>2</sup> Having distinguished himself unfavourably in the election riot in Dublin, in 1713, he confined his public appearances thenceforward to his own county. In 1719, either for amusement, or in pursuance of the campaign against Protestantism, he carried off and violated the daughter of a Quaker merchant at Cork, named Elizabeth Squibb. The details of the adventure have so far not been discovered. The Quakers, however, never deficient in determination, and, on this occasion, perhaps, because the offender was concerned in some political conspiracies as well, he was arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced. That justice should not be defrauded of its due through the connivance of the city officials, the Quakers maintained a watch of their own upon the gaol, and prevented an attempt at

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<sup>1</sup> BURKE'S *Peerage and Baronetage of Great Britain and Ireland*.

<sup>2</sup> *Commons' Journals*, September 29, 1707.

escape which was almost successful. Cotter was actually hanged.<sup>1</sup> All Cork and all the South of Ireland burst into a wail of rage, and the Friends were marked for retribution. Placards covered the walls.<sup>2</sup> Quaker girls were mobbed in the streets of Cork, and threatened with being 'Cottered.' No Quaker could show

<sup>1</sup> That the violation, and not any supposed conspiracy, was the offence for which Cotter was executed, is quite certain.

A petition of the Quakers preserved in Dublin Castle, dated June 11, 1720, declares:—

'That since the execution of James Cotter for the rape he committed on the body of Elizabeth Squibb many Quakers have been assaulted and grossly abused,' &c.

<sup>2</sup> Two of these were sent by the Mayor of Cork to the Castle:—

The first is in prose. 'The following lines,' writes the mayor, 'were posted at the Land's End, going down to the house of Edward Fenn, Quaker:—

"Vengeance belongeth to me; I will repay, saith the Lord." Now look to it, ye hell-born crew. Cotter's life shall be a sting to your cursed carcasses that shall be meat for dogs, and your cursed souls to burning Acheron, where they will burn in flames during eternity. Fenn, look sharp, and other bursengutted dogs besides, the which were instruments of taking Cotter's breath. Other blackguard dogs look sharp.

'God save King James the Third, of England king, the whom will

soon pay anguish and punish in this matter.'

The other effusion is in verse. The patriotic muse, however, was under eclipse when it was composed:—

Poor grey-headed Ireland, with bloody  
tears,  
Sharp revenge will seek in her antient  
years,  
For being robbed of her famous peers.

Her drooping fabrics with grief oppress,  
Her entombed heroes will take no rest,  
Since Irish honour is a common jest.

Contented with loss he seemed to stand,  
Erecting sweet Cotter, her head and  
hand,

The illustrious front of a dejected land.

But since cruel fate, in its severest  
course,

Did sacrifice his blood without remorse,  
And not relenting signed his full divorce.

From nature and honour grown full  
mad,

Their forces unto fury needs must add,  
For such revenge as ne'er before was  
had.

Or else old Ireland will resign her  
breath,

And lose her life by his too sudden  
death,

For seas of blood will overrun the earth.

Weep, mourn, and fight, all you that can,  
And die with grief for that unspotted  
man,

A loss to nations more than I will scan.

If dead by sword, or if in field was  
slain,

Although the loss was great, 'twould  
ease the pain,

And to his heirs leave neither spot nor  
stain.

—'The Mayor of Cork to Secretary Webster, May 24, 1720.'

in the streets. The mayor appealed to the Catholic clergy to restrain the people. The Catholic clergy either would not or could not. The passion spread to Limerick, to Tipperary, and at last over all Catholic Ireland. Quakers' meeting-houses were sacked and burnt. Quakers travelling about the country were waylaid and beaten. A girl in Dublin, who was mistaken for Elizabeth Squibb, was beset by a mob of several thousand people, and would have been torn in pieces but for the arrival of a company of soldiers.<sup>1</sup> The rage against the Friends continued unabated till it culminated, five years after, in an outrage for which, happily, no parallel can be found except in a Catholic country. Human wickedness is a plant which will grow in all soils and climates. The combination of fiendish malignity with pretensions to piety are the peculiar growth of the Church of Rome. The story is thus told by an eyewitness, Paul Lydy, who turned informer.<sup>2</sup>

‘ On or about the 22nd of February, 1725, Paul Lydy, with ten others, eleven in all, went to the house  
 1725 of Edward Johnstone, of Carroe, Quaker. Lydy, having a sledge in his hand, broke open Johnstone's door; seven or eight of them then went in and took what money and goods they could find, pulled said Edward Johnstone out of bed, tied him neck and heels and dragged him into the kitchen, and then and there

<sup>1</sup> ‘ Examination of Rachel Carlton, servant to Ebenezer Pike, of the city of Cork, merchant, May 30, 1720.’ *MSS.* Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> Repeated, with some additional circumstances, in a Proclamation issued by Lord Carteret, a copy of which is in the British Museum.

heated a griddle on the fire. Three of them then put said Johnstone on the griddle, stark naked, and heaped hot coals upon him, and continued torturing him after an inhuman and barbarous manner, and burned his body, and most cruelly beat his wife. Lydy stood at the door, and did see Johnstone striving to keep the fire from his body; and James Matthias, one of the party, still kindling the fire, and urging and saying, "You son of a whore, you are no Christian." Johnstone often begged them to consider his grey hairs, and told them he would send for 300*l.* and give it them if they spared him. At those words James Matthias tripped Johnstone and kicked him on the back to that degree that he soon after died.'<sup>1</sup> Their work being done, the murderers sate down to supper. 'They had bread and cheese, and such like.' 'Being told that there was flesh there which they might have, they said they would not eat flesh in time of Lent.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Examination of Paul Lydy,' *King's County Depositions*, 1726. MSS. Dublin-Castle.

<sup>2</sup> 'Proclamation on the murder of Johnstone the Quaker, April 10, 1725.' The more common forms of crime in Ireland, wherever Protestants were the victims, were distinguished by a ferocity which goes far to justify even the offer of rewards for the heads of proclaimed outlaws.

In October, 1725, a party of Rapparees 'out on their keeping,' broke into the house of a Protestant

millar in Wexford, named Hayes. They tore the wife out of bed in her shift; tied her to the wall naked, by the fire; and, in order to force her to tell where her husband's money was concealed, heated two chisels red-hot, and seared her limb by limb. The wretched husband said she was with child to move them to pity. One of the party answered, that he would run a red-hot chisel into her body to her child if she would not give them up her money. Next they seized the husband himself, and were preparing



to burn him in the same way, when some neighbours, who had heard the cries, came to their help, and the Rapparees fled.—‘Examination of Catherine Hayes.’ *MSS.* Dublin.

A Dublin gentleman, a Mr. Woodley, had purchased some property in Muskerry, near Headfort. He placed upon it a resident Protestant steward, named Healy, who in a lawless neighbourhood, had a difficulty in holding his ground. The McCarties especially, once owners of all that county, but reduced to a corner of their inheritance in the Glenflesk mountains, looked with jealous eyes on the intruder. Some of McCarties’ people, on one occasion, stole a drove of Healy’s cattle. Healy took out a warrant against McCarty himself, and to prevent the warrant being served, the tenants determined to be beforehand with him.

On March 4, 1729, five of them, described as Papists and yeomen of

Glenflesk, armed with guns, clubs, and long skenes, broke into his house, and demanded possession of the warrant. When they had got it, to prevent him from giving trouble in the future, they knocked him down with their bludgeons, ‘cut, stabbed, and hackled him about the face and head;’ then, tying his hand and foot, forced open his mouth, cut out his tongue, shaved his ears close to the head, laid a block of stone under his arm, and smashed the bone upon it, and finally drove their skenes into his eyes and blinded him.

Even this was not enough. Leaving Healy weltering in his blood, they then set upon his wife, who was close on her confinement, beat and slashed her, and cut out her tongue also.—‘Examination of John Healy, of Coolgariff, in Muskerry, March 15, 1729.’ *MSS.* Dublin.

## SECTION III.

ABDUCTION and rape were not the only weapons with which the Irish carried on the war against their conquerors. More vulgar ruffians bore their <sup>1734</sup> part in making Ireland a dangerous abode to those who ventured to interfere with the national prejudices.

In the year 1734 there resided in Kiltrush, in county Clare, an active English gentleman named Captain Mark Newdigate. He had made himself obnoxious by threatening the parish priest, who was probably unregistered. The priest was called Richard Thornton. The priest's brother, Henry Thornton, was the Kiltrush attorney, a pretending Protestant, since, without conformity and taking the sacrament, he could not have obtained his licence to practise. Looking into the main street of the town was the house of a Sylvester Curtin. One evening in November, a man called MacMahon, who afterwards turned approver and told the story, said that, as he was going home from his work, Curtin called him inside his door, telling him he would make his fortune. In the kitchen he found Thornton the attorney with seven or eight others assembled. Curtin, in introducing him, said that he knew him for a hardy fellow who could keep a secret. Thornton took out a book and swore the party one by one to silence, and then said that he had 300*l.* to divide among them if they would go by night and kill

Captain Mark Newdigate. It would, as they all knew, be 'a great act of charity to put such a Protestant dog out of the world.' 'But they must make sure work, and avoid blundering about it, or Captain Mark would be the death of their priest.' They all swore an oath that they would do it, and dispersed for the moment, waiting for a convenient time. Some of them were Kerry men from across the Shannon, which at that season was often difficult to pass.

Some days later Curtin again called MacMahon, showed him a 'moidore,'<sup>1</sup> which the attorney Thornton had sent to drink success to their undertaking, and told him the Kerry boys were coming over, and they must go down to the shore to meet them. They were joined at the landing-place by several more of the confederates. The boat arrived while they were waiting. Two of her crew remained to keep her afloat to receive the others when the work was finished. The rest stopped, and the whole gang, nine or ten in number, were ready for business. MacMahon, as the moment for action drew near, showed signs of flinching. Darby Hackney, one of the Kilrush party, held a pistol at his head with a curse, and told him if he would not go he should not live to tell their secrets. Being in dread of his life, and, as he innocently admitted, for the sake of his proportion of the money, he gathered up his courage. 'They all three kissed each other, and said their fortunes would be ever made by performing such a fact, and likewise that it was a good deed to destroy

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<sup>1</sup> Portuguese money was in common use in Ireland at this time.

such a rogue that was so bad to their priest and constitution.' It was already dark, and they started for their work. But they stopped at Curtin's house on the way to apply the moidore to its purpose. Supper was laid out for them, and 'they all got so drunk that they could not pursue their business that night, and had to wait till next night, being Sunday night.' One of the party, Darby Hackney, availed himself ingeniously of the postponement to prove an alibi, should the murder get them into trouble. On the Sunday morning he fell in with two strangers in Kiltrush. Having a house in the town he invited them to sleep there. He made up beds for them between his own bed and the door. He waited till they were both asleep to steal over them and creep out; and having thus provided himself with witnesses who would swear he was to their knowledge at home, he rejoined the gang, who had been lying quiet the whole day in Curtin's kitchen. At length, at eleven o'clock that night, they sallied out sober and determined. They were ingenious villains: one of them named Gallivane, or Gaff, had induced Captain Newdigate, a fortnight before, to take him as a servant. He had thus learnt the disposition of the house, the room in which Newdigate slept, and the place where he kept his arms; and, which was equally important, he had made acquaintance with the dogs, which, at night, were loose about the premises. There was no moon, and the stars were behind clouds. With Gaff for a guide they scrambled across the bogs, eight or nine in all, to the house, Gaff instructing them the

while as to the position in which they would find the captain, and how to secure a large back sword which hung at his bed's head. It was eleven o'clock when they arrived. All was still. The dogs came out, but Gaff spoke to them and they licked his hand. Curtin, Darby Hackney, and three others, then each took a large stone; they flung them together at the house door, which flew open before the blow, and all rushed through the hall into the room where Gaff said the captain slept, meaning to stab him as he lay. Being without a light they stumbled in the darkness. The captain sprung from his bed in his nightgown, flew to the door, driving two of them before him back into the hall, and across the hall into the chimney corner. Frightened now for their own lives, these two cried out that they were being murdered. The captain shouted for his servants, calling them by their names, and bade them bring his hatchet that he might cut off the villains' heads. The servants dared not show themselves. The rest of the gang blundered back, thrusting with their swords where they believed Newdigate to be, but afraid to strike for fear of wounding one another. The captain easily eluded them, and slipped again into his bed-room for his gun. The assassins, groping about and stabbing right and left, at length collected in the faint light at the front door. Each thought the rest had done the work; none however could give any distinct assurance of having killed their man. Gaff and the boys from Kerry plunged back determined to find him, and 'crying out to shoot him

or cut his throat.' A voice from the darkness answered, 'I can shoot as well as you.' A flash followed. Newdigate's powder was damp, and missed fire. Being a powerful and extremely resolute person, he clubbed his gun, dashed at them where the dusky figures were visible coming in through the gloom, laid one dying on the floor with his skull broken, and attacked the rest so fiercely that they fled out dragging their wounded comrade. Outside they found a shivering servant girl, who begged them, if they meant to kill her, to leave so much breath in her 'that the clergyman might overtake the life' before she died. 'That much pardon she should have,' they said; but they had other work to think of. They were hurrying off, when they found that in the confusion one had left his pistols, another his wig, another half his coat in the hall; proof enough to identify and hang them. Ashamed to be baffled thus by one man, they again went in and blew the ashes on the hearth into a flame. But by this time the house was roused. Newdigate's brother, who slept in an adjoining building, was heard approaching with the farm servants. Curtin said he had run the captain through the body, and he could not live till day; and, with this comfort, they made off, dragging the dead body with them.

The sequel was highly characteristic. Captain Newdigate, if wounded at all, was but hurt slightly and recovered. The priest and the attorney and the lads of Kilrush and Kerry never dared again to attack so dangerous an antagonist. A wild affair had taken

place, meanwhile, a few miles down the coast, to be related in the next chapter, in which a Danish ship had been plundered of some chests of silver. The notable device of the conspirators was to swear that they were themselves the thieves, but that Newdigate had shared the booty with them. He, as an English officer, would be hanged, while they would be pardoned as approvers. This plot too failed ; or perhaps, as too perilous, it was planned only and never tried. The attempted murder, as usual, remained a mystery ; no evidence could be found, or none that sufficed for a conviction. Two years later the story was told by MacMahon, when a prisoner in the gaol at Ennis.

## SECTION IV.

IRISH crime, where the victim was a Protestant, assumed the character of legitimate war. Ravishers and murderers were avengers of the wrongs of <sup>1741</sup> their country, and, as such, were protected by the sympathies of the Catholic population. Under all conditions, even where no religion or political passion was concerned, violence was the first remedy which suggested itself. The extraordinary ferocity, which appeared occasionally in the better classes of Irish society as late as the middle of the last century, shows how inveterate by long indulgence national habits may become, and how slowly an inherited temperament can be brought to yield to the restraints of law and civilization. Symptoms, however, were beginning to show themselves of a better state of feeling, where the juries were not misled by national prejudice.

The Bodkins of Galway were descended from an Archbishop of Tuam, who, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, so far disregarded the laws of the Church as to beget and establish a family. There were, by this time, several branches of them. They had preserved their estates under the Articles, and among them held considerable property. Among the rest was a certain Oliver Bodkin, of Carnbane, a gentleman with an estate worth nine hundred a year—a large fortune for Ireland in the first half of the



last century. He had a brother called blind Dominick, blind of one eye; a son by a first marriage, named John; and, by his second wife, Margery, who was still living, another boy, a young Oliver, named after himself. The head of the family was a cousin, Mr. Bodkin of Carnbegg, a place at no great distance from Carnbane. All these Bodkins were Catholics.

The birth of the son by the second marriage, created jealousy and ill feeling. Alterations were made in the settlements which the elder brother thought himself entitled to resent. He quarrelled with his stepmother. His uncle Dominick took his side, and probably his kinsman at Carnbegg; for young John had left his father's house with the expectation of being appointed steward of the Carnbegg estate, where he had taken up his residence. He was a loose vagabond, given chiefly to idleness and horse-racing. Possibly he was found unfit for the office, or, from other causes, his prospects were unpromising. He preferred a nearer road to independence, which he could combine with the gratification of his revenge. 'Blind Dominick,' 'a man of huge bulk and horrid aspect,' had perhaps, also, some private grudges of his own. Shan Reagh—Red Shan—one of Oliver Bodkin's servants, was devoted to the elder son's interests, and resented the disfavour into which he had fallen. With the help of these two, and a friend named Edmund Burke, young John determined to 'revenge the villany and roguery of his father and stepmother,' and remove out of the way

the little brother who had stood between him and his fortune. It was the race week at Tuam, in September, 1741. Believing, or pretending to believe, that suspicion would at once fall upon him, he proposed, at first, that he should himself attend the races; that his uncle and the others should do the work in his absence, and that the spoils should be divided afterwards. This arrangement was not approved. The youth himself being the person chiefly interested, the other confederates insisted that he must bear his part, and he agreed to remain. Their number being still too small for so dangerous an enterprise, one more confederate was wanted. A certain Roger Kelly was pitched upon as a likely person; and, as a preliminary, Kelly, young John, Uncle Dominick, and Edmund Burke, dined together at Carnbegg House, and discussed their plans over tumblers of whiskey punch. Steel was preferred to firearms as making surer work. Kelly was asked if he had a knife fit for the purpose. He produced a heavy clasp knife. Dominick, who was a judge of weapons, objected that it would not answer, and brought out two long keen Irish skenes, which he said he would retouch upon a grindstone. Kelly was a sufficiently hardened villain, but his blood ran cold at these deliberate preparations. He went home, feigned illness, and shut himself up in his house; and the others, not caring to betray their secret further, concluded to act alone. A Galway merchant was staying at Carnbane, as Oliver Bodkin's guest, who

was reported to be a fearless, resolute man. They would have preferred to wait for his departure; but delay was dangerous. They met the following midnight outside the yard, Blind Dominick leading a large mastiff, 'to worry the house-dog should he fly at them;' and they four—young John, his uncle, Edmund Burke, and Red Shan—stole through the gate together. The farm-servants, two men and two boys, slept in the barn. Young John opened the barn-door, and asked whether Mr. Bodkin, of Carn-begg, was in his father's house that night. The men knew the voice, and answered drowsily that he was not, and turned over to sleep. It was a sleep from which they never woke. A few minutes later the skenes were across their throats. Each murderer secured his victim, and the four men and boys were quietly despatched. Safe from alarm from without, they then went on to the dwelling-house. The dogs, who knew them, let them pass in silence. They entered without noise. The situation of every bed being familiar to them, they had no need of lights. Two servants, a man and his wife, slept in the hall, on the left of the door where they glided in. Blind Dominick and Edmund Burke stabbed them both to the heart. No witness was to be left alive to convict the murderers. Young John disposed of the merchant in the stranger's room with equal swiftness and decision. Red Shan undertook the master of the house, and went direct to the room where old Oliver was sleeping, with his wife and the little boy. The

wife, who had been roused by an unusual sound, darted from the bed as he entered, and ran to the door. Shan, 'having a mind,' as he said, 'that she should escape,' allowed her to pass; but he cut the old man's throat where he lay, and afterwards killed the child. The mother reached the kitchen, only to fall into the hands of blind Dominick, her brother-in-law. She screamed for pity; he answered with a stab of his skene, and she too fell dead on the floor.

The completeness of the work—for every human creature in the house was destroyed—did not save the murderers. Public feeling, slowly as it changed, was roused to horror at so enormous a crime. Suspicion fell instinctively on those in whom alone a motive could be imagined to prompt such a deed. Kelly, anticipating discovery, told what he knew. Red Shan, to save his own life, turned approver, and described the horrid scene in all its particulars. All the parties were taken and brought to the bar immediately at the Galway Assizes. So profound was the excitement, that every detail was dwelt on with prolonged intensity. The hearing of the evidence lasted fourteen hours. The jury, with a promptitude which showed that here at least there was no misleading sympathy with crime, returned their verdict in ten minutes; and Burke, and young John Fitz Oliver, as he was called, and the huge one-eyed Dominick were instantly hanged.

The whole county was shaken with the horror of a story the memory of which still vaguely clings about the neighbourhood. Wild rumours filled the air.

Dominick's ghost, it was said, had drawn the curtains of a friend sleeping sixty miles away, at the hour when the murders were being done, and muttered threats of savage revenge. For once even the Galway mob were on the side of justice, and the assassins went to their doom amidst a chorus of execrations, unbroken with the faintest note of sympathy.

Yet Ireland was but reaping the fruit of her own leniency for patriotic criminals, whose deeds were in no degree less infamous. Her tenderness for rape and murder, where the victims were her imagined enemies, familiarized the minds of men with violence; and when it is remembered, that all the parties concerned were gentlemen, members of one of the best families in the county of Galway, the Bodkin murder must be regarded as characteristic of a condition of society in which alone the passions could have been generated which prompted such elaborate ferocity.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the history of the Bodkin murder, see 'Confession and Examination of John Hogan, otherwise Reagh, of Carnbegg, Co. Galway, September 23, 1741.' tember 26, 1741.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

'The Bishop of Clonfert to the Bishop of Dromore, March, 27, 1742.' *MSS.* Record Office.

'Confession of Roger Kelly, Sep-

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SMUGGLERS.

## SECTION I.

WHEN England, in defence of her monopolies, thought proper to lay restrictions on the Irish woollen trade, it was foretold that the inevitable result would be an enormous development of <sup>1730</sup> smuggling.

The price of fleece wool in Ireland in 1730 was fivepence a pound; of combed wool twelve pence a pound. In France Irish fleece wool was sold for two shillings and sixpence a pound; combed wool from four shillings and sixpence to six shillings.<sup>1</sup> The profits of the contraband trade were thus so considerable, that the temptations to embark in it were irresistible. Out of the thirty-two counties of Ireland nineteen are maritime. The coast round three-quarters of the island is indented and pierced by deep bays and intricate creeks, which from the sea it was impossible effectively to watch. On land, with the whole

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<sup>1</sup> 'Proposals to prevent the exportation of wool to France:' by Mr. Knox, 1730. MSS. Dublin Castle.

population combined to embarrass and defeat them, an army of revenue officers would have been insufficient to prevent the running of cargoes. Enormous wages would have been necessary if they were to be proof against the corruption to which the gain of the trade would ensure their being exposed; while, in the eyes of the Irish themselves, the evasion of the iniquitous law which had destroyed their lawful commerce was exalted into a virtue.

Thus, in spite of English Acts of Parliament, and the fleet of armed cruisers which hung about the southern and western shores, four-fifths of the Irish fleeces were carried annually to France. The rivalry which the English clothiers so much dreaded became a fact in spite of them. In 1779, when the Government condescended at last to listen to the remonstrances of the Irish Parliament, Mr. Hely Hutchinson laid privately before Lord Harcourt a fair statement of the system and of its consequences.

‘As the law stands,’ he said, ‘we can sell our wool and woollen goods only to Great Britain. We can buy woollen cloths there only. If such a law related to two private men instead of two kingdoms, and enjoined that in buying and selling the same goods one individual should deal with one man only in exclusion of others, it would in effect ordain that both as buyer and seller, that man should fix his own price and profit, and would refer to his discretion the loss and profit of the other dealer. You have defeated your own object. The exclusion of Ireland from the woollen

trade has been more injurious to you than to us. One pack of Irish wool works up two packs of French wool. The French undersell the English, and, as far as they are supplied with Irish wool, the loss to England is double what it would be if the Irish exported their wool manufactured. . . . As to the practice of running wool, Ireland has paid to Great Britain for eleven years past<sup>1</sup> double the sum she collects from the whole world in all the trade which Great Britain allows her; a fact not to be paralleled in the history of mankind. Whence did all this money come? Our very existence is dependent on our illicit commerce.’<sup>2</sup>

Ingenuity could not have invented a commercial policy less beneficial to the country in whose interests it was adopted, or better contrived to demoralize the people at whose expense it was pursued. A large and fast-spreading branch of manufacture was destroyed, which was tempting capital and enterprise and an industrious Protestant population into Ireland. A form of industry was swept away which would have furnished employment to the native Irish, and brought them under settled habits, which would have made

<sup>1</sup> He might have said 50 years. In 1729 the total acknowledged exports of Ireland were £1,053,782  
The total imports . 819,761

Balance . £234,021  
Out of which balance Ireland paid in rents to absentees 600,000*l.* The absentee rents rather increased than diminished with the progress of the century. Heavy pensions

were paid by the Irish Establishment to persons residing in England. There were no gold or silver mines in Ireland. The money that went out must have come in from some quarter or other; and the profits of the smuggling trade give the only conceivable explanation.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Mr. Hely Hutchinson to Lord Harcourt, July 1 1779.’ *MSS.* Record Office.



four Ulsters instead of one, and raised each of the four to double the prosperity which the province which preserved the linen trade has in fact obtained. But even these consequences were not the worst fruits of these preposterous restrictions. The entire nation, high and low, was enlisted in an organized confederacy against the law. Distinctions of creed were obliterated, and resistance to law became a bond of union between Catholic and Protestant—Irish Celt and English colonist,—from the great landlord whose sheep roamed in thousands over the Cork mountains to the gauger who, with conveniently blinded eyes, passed the wool packs through the custom-house as butter barrels; from the magistrate whose cellars were filled with claret on the return voyage of the smuggling craft, to the judge on the bench who dismissed as frivolous and vexatious the various cases which came before the courts to be tried. All persons of all ranks in Ireland were principals or accomplices in a pursuit which, however pardonable in itself, could be carried on only by evasion, perjury, and violence. The very industry of the country was organized upon a system which made it a school of anarchy; and good servants of the State, who believed that laws were made to be obeyed, lay under the ban of opinion as public enemies.

At the beginning there was neither attempt at nor need of concealment. Cargoes of spirits were landed at Dublin Quay. If notice was given to the Commissioners they turned the other way.<sup>1</sup> Packs of wool

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<sup>1</sup> 'One of the smugglers came lately into Dublin harbour itself,

lay in open daylight in the warehouses at Cork, and were shipped in vessels lying along the quay. The officers of the customs looked on with undisturbed composure. The few who might have wished to interfere knew that it would be useless, and did not care to make themselves hated gratuitously.<sup>1</sup> Finding themselves defied in this way, the Government tried stricter methods, substituted English officers for Irish at the chief ports like Waterford and Cork, and stationed cruisers along the coast to seal the mouths of the smaller harbours. But the trade only took refuge in bays and creeks where cruisers dared not run in. If encountered at sea the contraband vessels were sometimes armed so heavily that the Government cutters and schooners hesitated to meddle with them. If unarmed and overhauled, they were found apparently laden with some innocent cargo of salt provisions. The wool was pressed with screws into barrels, which were washed with brine, that they might pass for

and was running her cargo at midnight, when accidentally discovered by an acquaintance of mine, who seized the goods, and was tempted by a good round sum to make up the matter; but being proof against temptation would not, being persuaded the goods would be forfeited. To his loss and my great surprise they were acquitted, as I hear, by the Commissioners of Customs, to the great discouragement of all honest merchants.—‘Hugh Guyon to Lord Carteret, Jan. 20, 1725.’ *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>1</sup> ‘All officers that attempt to obstruct the exportation are discountenanced, nor will a jury find a seizure, or a judge condemn it. Wool goes out by shiploads, and warehouses at the water side are crammed with it, and no notice taken except by accident now and then. Greater quantities are sent to France than are consumed in this country, or sent to England.’ —‘Charles King to Lord Stanhope, February 15, 1716.’ *MSS.* Record Office.

butter, herring, or salt pork casks. The more determined the authorities showed themselves the more resolute were the Irish, the lawlessness and wildness of the trade giving it fresh zest. Driven from the Cork warehouses the packs were stored in caves about the islands, and cliffs, and crags, where small vessels took them off at leisure; or French traders, on signal from shore, sent in their boats for them. Chests of bullion were kept by the merchants at Rochelle and Brest to pay for them as they were landed. When the French Government forbade the export of so much specie, claret, brandy, and silks were shipped for Ireland in exchange on board the vessels which had brought the wool.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, by a curious combination, the system worked the extremity of mischief, commercially, socially, and politically. It fostered and absolutely bred and necessitated habits of lawlessness. It promoted a close and pernicious connection between Ireland and France. In times of war French privateers found shelter all along the Irish coast in positions most convenient to them, and most dangerous to English commerce. In times both of war and peace, it inundated Ireland with wine and brandy cheap and excellent, and produced the hard drinking which gave social life there so ill a fame. Singularly too, while the smuggling provided an open road for the going and coming of the priesthood, it linked itself to the service of the Pretender.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Proposals to prevent the exportation of wool to France,' by Mr. Knox, 1730. MSS. Dublin.

Irish 'Wild Geese' in thousands were drafted down to Kenmare or Dingle, Galway or Roundstone, and were shipped to France. If the Pretender was meditating a descent, Irish regiments were collected for him at a few weeks' notice. If the Pretender himself was lying quiet, there was always the Irish brigade, earning pay and glory under the flag of England's enemies. Wherever along the southern and western coasts English authority and English civilization had taken root, means were found to clear away the intruders, or make them conform to the customs of the country. An active officer like Captain Newdigate could be shot or knocked on the head. The Protestant settlements on the Kenmare river, which had been established by Sir William Petty, dwindled slowly away. Most of the families melted into the Irish population. The few who retained their English creed and habits, and were thus inconvenient neighbours to the smugglers, were at last carried away as prisoners by French privateers. The gentry entered heartily into the game. 'Though there are several Protestant gentlemen in the county of Kerry,' wrote the Duke of Devonshire in 1740, 'yet for one odd reason or other there is little prospect of doing good by their means.' The Knight of Kerry, who was the occasion of the Duke's observation, had his cellar regularly supplied from Bordeaux, and in return was blind to everything which it was not desirable that he should see.

## SECTION II.

SINGULAR pictures survive of some of these Kerry potentates who, 'for one odd reason or another,'  
 1719 were found unserviceable for keeping order.

The enormous, but at the time when it was granted entirely unprofitable, property there which fell into the hands of Sir William Petty, had lapsed gradually under long leases to middlemen, who, though compelled by law to profess conformity with the Establishment, earned absolution by the steadiness with which they entertained and protected the priests. Petty had bequeathed to his descendants along with his fortune his political genius, and had the Shelburne family consented to reside on their estates, these gentlemen would either have had no existence, or would have found the sphere of their activity altogether curtailed. But the Shelburnes became habitual absentees. The small beginnings of civilized life, which had been introduced there, disappeared; and, so long as their rents were regularly paid, they asked no questions, and troubled themselves with no responsibilities.

The great baronies of Dunkerron and Iveragh, which form the north shore of the Kenmare Bay, extending from Kenmare itself forty miles to Waterville, and thence inland to the watershed where the streams divide which run into the bays of Kenmare or Ding'e,

were held along with other properties, in the early part of the last century, under a lease renewable for ever by Mr. Daniel (or Donell) Mahony, of Dunloe. In Dunkerron there yet lingered a dozen Protestant families, the last remnant of Petty's colony, quiet people who had come to make a living by industry, and were unsuited to their present master. These families had occasion, in 1719, to represent their situation to the Viceroy. Mr. Mahony, they said, 'had for some years continued to make himself great and dreadful in the county.' He had four thousand people under him, under-tenants and their labourers, all Catholics, whose business was to prevent the collectors of the revenue from troubling honest fellows with their importunities; to keep at a distance the whole race of bailiffs and process servers; in short, to make what are called law and order impossible in Kerry. Going about by day disguised as women, at night in large gangs, with blacked faces and white shirts, they were called Mr. Daniel Mahony's fairies, and never had wizard familiar spirits better disposed to do his bidding. 'So mighty was Mr. Mahony's power, that no Papist in Ireland had the like.' There were still some few forests on the mountain sides which Lord Shelburne retained; but his rangers existed on sufferance, and, if they gave trouble, were immediately '*mortified*.'<sup>1</sup> 'Hearth-money collectors and civil officers went about in peril of their lives.'

Daniel himself was described as 'a wilful man

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<sup>1</sup> Murdered !

without remorse or conscience.' Sheltered by Lord Shelburne's name, and affecting to be his representative, 'if he sent the least word, he was obeyed upon all unlawful occasions;' and he had counsellors and attorneys in his pay at the Four Courts, who carried him through when a poor creature sought protection against him from the law. Once and once only the Government had meddled with him. On all the lands held under the Act of Settlement there was a quit rent reserved to the Crown, which was paid by the tenant. It was surmised, with excellent reason, that Mahony had made an imperfect return of the lands held by him under his lease from Lord Shelburne; and a surveyor, named Maurice Kennedy, was sent down to Killarney to make enquiries. The Viceroy might be supreme in Dublin Castle, but Donell Mahony was sovereign at Killarney. The ill-advised Maurice had made his notes; had discovered, as he conceived, distinct delinquency, and had collected evidence to prove it. The Fairies one night burst rudely into his lodging, dragged him from his bed, beat him with most unghostlike efficiency, plundered him of the papers which were to bring Mahony to justice, and left him to find his way out of the country a sadder and a wiser man. The Dunkerron memorialists could but pray the Viceroy to quarter a company of soldiers at Dunloe to 'civilize Mr. Mahony and his spirits,' if Kerry was to remain a home for loyal subjects and peaceful industry.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Humble Address of His Majesty's loyal subjects of Macquinihy, 1719.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

It is hardly necessary to say that a Dublin Lord Lieutenant was no match for Daniel and his four thousand Fairies. The memorialists either <sup>1751</sup> submitted to fate and to the ruler which the genius of Ireland had set over them, or betook themselves to some more quiet home. The singular figure of Daniel Mahony is a specimen of the class of middlemen to whom the wild districts, now frequented by tourists and sportsmen, were surrendered for the greater part of the last century. Absentéism was bearing its legitimate fruit. The escheated lands of the chiefs had been allotted to Englishmen to reclaim and civilize, and to settle with Protestant colonies; and the English owners, reducing their duties to the receiving of rents and spending them, left the lands to those who have created modern Ireland and the modern Irish race.

At times the type assumed a form yet wilder and more picturesque. Sir William Petty's domains extended to the south as well as to the north side of the Kenmare river. The long peninsula which divides the bays of Bantry and Kenmare, had been the dominion of the O'Sullivans of Berehaven, and Sullivan still remains the name of half the families in the barony. There, too, in the midst of the mountains, the descendants of the old chief's family continued as the vicegerents on the soil of their fathers, amidst the wrecked remains of the once thriving Protestant colony. The Wild Geese and the privateers swept off the handful that remained, and had now the bay to themselves; and the O'Sullivan of Derreen ruled without a rival, a



great smuggling chief, and a trusted agent of the Pretender, through whose hands the enthusiasts for his cause were shipped for Nantes and the brigade.

Morty Oge O'Sullivan, O'Sullivan Bere as he was called—as much loved and honoured as his kinsman of Derreen—had made his home ten miles nearer to the Atlantic beyond the Shelburne boundary, on the wild bay of Bally Quoilach, at a place called Eyris. Morty, in his youth, had been a distinguished officer in the Austrian army, where, had he chosen to remain, he might have risen to rank and favour at the court of Maria Theresa. His country and his King—his country rather, and the adventurous life which opened to him there, had charms too strong for him to resist. He went home, and undertook the convoying of the Wild Geese; and at Eyris, an outlaw with a price on his head, yet secured on the land side by the idolatry of the O'Sullivan clan, and at sea strong enough to be his own protector, Captain Morty for a score of years lived and throve, and defied the Government and its myrmidons to meddle with him. His brigantine, which lay moored before his door, carried eight heavy swivel guns. She was so strong that no cruiser ventured to engage her single-handed. The anchorage was so dangerous, so intricate, and well-guarded, that no combined force could venture in to assail her. In peace time she was a smuggler. In war she carried the French flag under letters of marque, and was the pest and plague of English commerce; and Paul Jones and 'Le Bon Homme Richard' were scarcely more

terrible thirty years later in the two channels than Morty Sullivan and his Irish clipper.

At length, in the middle of the century, a brave and honourable revenue officer named Puxley, inherited from his brother an estate at Berehaven on Bantry Bay, from which there was a near pass through the mountains to Morty's den.

Revenue officers were usually rendered harmless by quiet methods. Their pay was small. The Government was lax. They had only to accept a percentage on the cargoes run out or in, and to be conveniently absent when anything was to happen of which they were to be kept in ignorance. Puxley, who is said to have come from Galway, yet was English in character, and had brought with him English notions of duty. In 1751, soon after his arrival, he sent an account of Morty to Dublin Castle, and suggested means by which both he and his brigantine could be captured.<sup>1</sup>

As usual, no notice was taken. There being no formal coastguard in those days, each officer was obliged to rely upon his own resources, and, if he intended to be active, had to gather men about him on whom he could depend. Puxley added to his lands about Berehaven, either buying or taking leases for lives. He inherited from his brother, among other places, the famous Dunboy Castle, which was stormed by Sir George Carew in the Earl of Tyrone's rebellion, after a splendid defence by Morty's ancestors, in which the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Extract of a letter from John Puxley, September 14, 1751.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

whole garrison perished. He had thus an important position, but one which at the same time strengthened the smuggler's hatred of him. Here, in their midst, was one of the tyrants of Ireland of the true old ruling stamp; and either they must make short work with Puxley, or Puxley would make an end of them.

He knew his danger, but, dangerous or not, he had undertaken a work which he meant to go through with. The brigantine went to and fro between France and the Kenmare river. In the summer of 1752 Puxley reported her as lying at her moorings, having just come in from the sea. She had brought a cargo of arms, which had been landed, and were being distributed among the people. Some French officers had arrived in her, who were sent to recruit for the brigade. She was taking in wool with which she was about to sail for Rochelle, and on her next voyage she was to carry back the officers and men.

If Morty's doings were known to Puxley, Morty's own eye was fixed no less keenly on the English officer. He had already disposed of one at least of Puxley's predecessors who had been too officious. Puxley himself was doubly hateful as the possessor of Dunboy. He could stir nowhere without a guard. 'If these Raps could put him out of the way,' he said, 'they would govern as they pleased, and carry on free trade with France and Spain.' He begged for a frigate, with a company of soldiers from Kinsale. With this assistance he undertook to make a clearance of the two bays; search all the hiding-places, discover

the arms and the French officers, and, perhaps, take even Morty himself.

If it was worth while to paralyze Irish trade with prohibitory laws, it might have been expected that means so simple and obvious would not have been neglected to make those laws effectual. But the smuggling interest was potent even in Dublin Castle itself. No frigate came from Kinsale. Not a ship of war of any kind, Puxley said, had been seen at Berehaven since he became an officer. Single-handed, he was no match for Morty; so till help came he kept to his own side of the mountains, and made war with his own armed boats on the petty smugglers of Bantry and Glengariff. Through the autumn and winter of 1752 he worked bravely on. By the following summer he had seized half-a-dozen cargoes; and had sunk as many sloops, or driven them ashore on Whiddy Island.<sup>1</sup> Morty, busy with his own concerns, or not caring to meddle so long as he was himself left alone, left Bantry to deal with him, and the Bantry men having no stomach for a fight tried safer means.

All the country side was by this time furious; the wool-packs lay rotting in the caves; the stores of claret and brandy ran low, and no full cargoes could be run in Glengariff harbour to refill the empty bins. Who was this miserable Puxley that he should spoil the trade by which the gentry were making their fortunes, which the Castle winked at, and which the

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<sup>1</sup> 'John Puxley to the Revenue Commissioners, June 9.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

connivance of half a century had legitimized? In the twilight of the South of Ireland civilization, it had been discovered that the forms of self-government which England had introduced could become, in skilful hands, as good a weapon as the sword. Law administered by Irish juries and magistrates did the work of anarchy, and violence ceased to be necessary, save in the rare cases where law had been tried and failed.

‘Necessity,’ wrote the unfortunate officer to his employers after four years’ work at his post, ‘obliges me to give your honours the trouble hereof, and to let you know the unhappy situation I am in at Berehaven, ready to be devoured by my enemies the smugglers, who have all concerted my banishment out of that unhappy country — as well Protestants as Papists. They are joined by some of the landlords of the Berehaven estate to execute their design. To which intent they keep me constantly going at assize and sessions by laying themselves out in every respect to provoke and abuse me both publicly and privately; all which malice arises from no other provocation given them more than my activity in serving the Crown, and being a check to the trade formerly carried on in this country, which I have destroyed. . . . I have been so unfortunate as to have six or seven landlords to every denomination of land in that country.

1754 I have better than half of what farms I hold in lease. The other parts which I have not in lease I could not get by any means, which lays me under the greatest difficulty, for the owners thereof

have put Papist tenants in common with me throughout the whole, and also in my dwelling-house they have put a tenant. I assure you his majesty has not a subject in the kingdom so much oppressed as I have been; and, though my forefathers fought for liberty, I am made a sacrifice to Papists supported by Protestants, who will, if they can, deprive me of liberty and property.’<sup>1</sup>

The ingenious persecution either failed, or was too slow in effecting its purpose. Or it may have been that the Captain of the *Eyris* brigantine was stirred to action by some fresh grudge of his own. At any rate a revenue officer determined to do his duty was a public nuisance of whom it was necessary to rid the country; and, as Puxley stood to his work in spite of legal annoyances, there remained the good old method which could be better depended on. One Sunday in March, two months after his last letter to the Commissioners, as he was on his way to church at Glengariff, he was waylaid ‘at a smith’s forge’ by Morty and two companions, and there killed.<sup>2</sup>

The murder of an active public servant by so notorious a person as Morty was too serious a thing to be passed over. The brigantine was busy as ever, and at that moment there was a special cause of irritation with Morty, for a party of soldiers had been tempted by his agents to desert from a regiment at Cork, and were hiding in the mountains, waiting for Morty to carry them to France. The ‘Garland’ frigate

<sup>1</sup> ‘John Puxley to the Revenue Commissioners, January 27, 1754.’ *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Samuel Morris to the Commissioners of Revenue, March 14, 1754.’ *Ibid.*

lay at Kinsale. Orders were sent to the captain to go round into Kenmare Bay, discover, and sink her. The difficulties, whatever they were, which invariably attended active measures against the Irish smugglers, if overcome at the Castle, remained formidable at Kinsale. The captain of the 'Garland' wrote that he was detained at his anchorage by a gale of wind. The same cause, he pretended, must prevent the brigantine from sailing, and when the storm lulled he promised to go in search of her. Either the brigantine was a better sea-boat than the 'Garland,' or Morty a better seaman than her commander, for before the 'Garland' left her anchorage the brigantine was away on the coast of France. Morty, however, was not to escape so easily. The half-awakened justice would probably have sunk to sleep again, but for Puxley's two nephews, Henry and Walter Fitzsimon, who shamed or spurred the Governor of Cork into real exertion. Walter had a small vessel of his own; another belonging to the Crown lay at Cove. Two months later, when Morty was known to have returned to Eyrish, Henry Fitzsimon with these two boats and a company of soldiers went round to Berehaven. They came in from the sea after dark. The troops were silently landed, and a rapid march of an hour in heavy rain, through the pass in the hills, brought them about midnight to Morty's dwelling-place.

It was a strange wild place, close to the sea, amidst rocks and bogs and utter desolation. Near it stood the wreck of a roofless church, and the yet older ruin of some Danish pirates' nest. The shadowy form of the

brigantine was visible through the grey sheet of falling rain at anchor in the harbour, and from the rocks at the entrance came the moaning of the Atlantic swell. Morty, looking for no visitors on such a night, had neglected to post sentinels. The house was surrounded, and the wolf was trapped. The dogs inside were the first to take alarm. A violent barking was heard, and then suddenly the door was thrown open. Morty appeared in his shirt, fired a blunderbuss at the men who were nearest him, and retired. A volley of small arms followed from the windows and slits in the wall. One soldier was killed and three others wounded. The strictest orders had been given to take Morty if possible alive, and the fire was not at first returned. The house was evidently full of men; eighteen of them bolted, one after the other, in the hopes of drawing off the troops into pursuit. Each, however, was caught and examined, and, when found not to be the man whom the party came in search of, was let go. At last there were but five left in the house. Morty saw that his time was come. He did not choose to be taken, and determined to die like a man. He sent out his wife and child, who were with him, with a request that their lives might be saved. The officer in command received them kindly, and gave them such protection as he could. Morty himself refused to surrender; it was determined to set fire to the thatch, and wild fire was thrust under the eaves. The straw was soaked with the wet, and long refused to catch. At last it blazed up; the flames seized the dry rafters; the roof fell in; and, amidst the burning ruins, Morty and his



four remaining companions were seen standing at bay, blunderbuss in hand. He was evidently desperate, and to save life it was necessary to shoot him. The soldiers fired; Morty fell with a ball through his heart. Two of his comrades fell at his side; the other two were taken; the same two, it so happened, who had been Morty's companions at the murder of Puxley.<sup>1</sup> One of them, Little John Sullivan he was called, was perhaps Morty's kinsman; the name of the other was Daniel Connell. The barony of Iveragh and Derrynane Abbey, where the Connells, or O'Connells, of later celebrity had already established themselves, was but seven miles distant across the water; and it is thus possible, and even probable, that Daniel Connell, who had assisted at Puxley's murder, and escaped the bullets at Eyris, was a scion of the same family which, in the next generation, produced the Liberator.

The weather making it impossible to carry off the brigantine, she was sunk, when daylight came, at her anchorage. The fire was extinguished; the ruins of the house were searched; and Morty's account books (he was punctual as Dirk Hatteraick himself in his money transactions), his bills, notes, and papers were found uninjured. Among them were found letters from many persons of consequence in the country, showing that they were accomplices in the assassination

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<sup>1</sup> Fitzsimon even says that they had taken an active share in the murder.

'We had the pleasure,' he writes, 'of shooting him dead, and two of his accomplices, and like-

wise took Daniel Connell and little John Sullivan prisoners, who were the principal murderers.'—'Henry Fitzsimon to the Commissioners of the Revenue, May 7, 1754.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

of the revenue officer. Twenty ankers of brandy and some chests of tea had been destroyed by the fire.

Morty's body was carried to Cork. His head mouldered upon a spike over the gate of the south gaol. The rest of him was buried in <sup>1754</sup> the Battery. The prisoners can be traced to the gaol; there is no mention that either of them were hanged, but of their further fate the records are silent.

So ended one of the last heroes of Irish imagination, on whose character the historian, who considers that he and such as he were the natural outgrowth of the legislation to which it was thought wise and just to submit his country, will not comment uncharitably. He had qualities which, had Ireland been nobly governed, might perhaps have reconciled him to its rulers, and opened for him an honourable and illustrious career. At worst he might have continued to serve with his sword a Catholic sovereign, and might have carved his way with it to rank and distinction. He was tempted home by the opportunities of anarchy and the hopes of revenge. In his own adventurous way he levied war to the last against the men and the system under which Ireland was oppressed. When he fell, he fell with a courage which made his crimes forgotten, and the ghost of his name still hovers about the wild shores of the Kenmare river, of which he was so long the terror and the pride.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the account of the death, *Ireland*: 'a Letter of the Captain of Morty Oge O'Sullivan see an extract from the *Cork Remembrancer*, May 9, 1754, quoted by Crofton Croker in the *Keen of the South of Ireland*: 'a Letter of the Captain of H.M.S. "Garland," March, 1754;' and the 'Letter of Henry Fitzsimon to the Revenue Commissioners, May 7, 1754.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

## SECTION III.

I HAVE told the story of one distinguished Sullivan.

I have now to tell the story of a second, himself  
 1727 also a representative Irishman, though of a less  
 worthy type.

Sylvester O'Sullivan, a near kinsman of Morty, perhaps his uncle, for he was of the highest blood of the clan, bred like him on Kilmakilloge harbour, but given rather to books than to the adventurous habits of his relations, had, about the year 1718, been the master of a Catholic school in Dublin. He might have taught Virgil and Ovid to lads of his own creed, even under the shadow of the Parliament, without danger of the law interfering with him; but he had the misfortune, or the rashness, to pervert two scholars of Trinity College, whom the High Church fellows had already led to the edge of the Catholic faith. For this exploit he was tried under the penal statute, and required to transport himself abroad. He went to Paris: but the Continent disagreed with him; he began to pine for home, and, after a few years, presented himself to Horace Walpole, who was then English ambassador at the French Court, expressed contrition for his sins, and professed a desire to do some service to the English Crown which might entitle him to pardon. Horace Walpole enquiring what the service was to be, O'Sulli-

van produced a sketch in writing of the enterprise which he contemplated. It was nothing less than to take advantage of the connexion of his family with the Cork and Kerry smugglers, and of his own reputation as having been persecuted for his religion, to wind himself into their secrets, spy out their hiding-places, discover and report on the persons of rank and position whom he could find to be in correspondence with them, procure, in fact, such information as would enable the Government to break up the traffic.

If a man volunteered a disgraceful but useful occupation it was not Walpole's business to discourage him. He gave O'Sullivan a letter of credit should he be arrested on returning to Ireland. Thus provided he went down to Nantes, fell in there with the master of a Kinsale brig, which was taking in her contraband cargo—brandy, linen, and tea; and giving his name, which seemed a guarantee for his honesty, was admitted as passenger to Valencia, for which the brig was bound. It was midwinter, when the cruisers were off their stations, and the coast was clear. The main channel into the roadstead of Valencia opens to the north, with a passage practicable in all weathers. Immediately within is a large, roomy, and perfectly safe harbour, where at this time a king's ship was usually stationed. From the main harbour to the south-western entrance, where the telegraph-wire now plunges into the Atlantic, runs a strip of quiet water ten miles long, which divides the island from the main land. Here, sheltered behind the mountains, through

a rift in which the channel opens to the ocean, lies the small basin of Port Maghee.

The approach on this side is supremely dangerous ; the enormous seas which have broken on the Irish shore for hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of years, have eaten their way through the rocks, destroying the more yielding portions, and leaving the harder nodules rising from the bottom in treacherous ridges or invisible needle points, over which the rollers pour in roaring cataracts of foam. A sailing vessel attempting to enter with anything but a leading breeze, if caught in the narrow outlet in heavy weather by an eddy of wind among the hills, would be broken against the crags like an egg. A stranger shuns the place as the ancient mariners shunned the fatal cliffs of Scylla ; and, for the same reason, it was the chosen resort of the local smuggler. Here, three days after Christmas, in the year 1727, the Nantes brig made the Irish coast, and passing boldly in with a west wind between the breakers, was soon at anchor in the quiet cove, which was called after the family of the Maghees, to whom the land belonged.

At this time the ruling potentate was a widow, the widow Maghee she was called, once Bridget Crosby, sister or cousin of Sir Maurice Crosby, of Ardfert, the member for the county. The new-comer had a warm welcome. Smuggler was to smuggler a friend that sate closer than a brother. No informer as yet had ventured into Kerry. The widow's own sloop was lying at the pier taking in a cargo of wool. Boats and

lighters came off in the daylight to carry in and dispose of the Nantes' brandy kegs. In the middle of their operations a man-of-war's gig came down from the guardship at Valencia, with an order for the brig to move up to the main harbour: not, however, for any vexatious enquiries into her contents, which were perfectly notorious, but only because the captain and officers expected a percentage of the spoil. The watch-dog was to share the carcass with the wolf, and preferred to keep his eyes on the division. The brig ran up as she was ordered, anchored within a cable's length of the ship, and went on with her business. The country people came on board in hundreds. A brandy auction was held on deck, and a hundred and twenty ankers were disposed of as fast as the boats could take them away, besides what the captain, and officers, and crew of the man-of-war received for their own perquisites.

All this pretty scene Sylvester O'Sullivan was noting down at his leisure, when by accident, in drawing out his handkerchief, he dropped <sup>1728</sup> Horace Walpole's letter on the brig's deck. Some one picked it up, opened and read its contents. It was merely a pass for protection, but it proved that the pretended sufferer for conscience had closer relations with the British Government than he had allowed to appear. Fierce faces scowled at him. It was proposed to send him on shore among the Rapparees of the Reeks, where his shrift would be a short one. He was attacked at last, and would have been killed, had he

not snatched a brace of pistols and kept his assailants at bay, till a party of Sullivans, his own clansmen, who knew him, and stood by him for his birth's sake, interposed and carried him away. The Sullivans, he says, would not allow him to be hurt; but in their eyes, as well as in every man's, his coming to Kerry under false colours was painfully questionable. They put him on the road to Dublin, to which he professed to be going, restored to him his doubtful credentials, and left him to find his own way.

At Killarney he informs us that he injured a leg, and was unable to proceed. To lose no time, and to keep his word with Walpole, he wrote an account of what he had seen at Valencia and Port Maghee, addressed it to the Castle Secretary, and not liking to trust a packet of such dangerous import to the ordinary 'carriers,' he gave it to a gentleman going to Tralee to post in the general office there.

Superfluous caution often creates the mischief which it seeks to avoid. The gentleman, whose name was Wall, suspecting that the letter contained something unusual, took the liberty of reading it. He too, like every one else in the county, was interested in keeping the smugglers undisturbed. Instead of taking it to Tralee, he carried it to the smugglers' agents in the town, and Sullivan was in a worse scrape than before. Copies of the letter were circulated about Killarney. The women howled at him as an informer. The boys threw stones at him if he showed in the street. One day a certain 'Pat Kelly' the schoolmaster, who was

one of Donell Mahony's Fairies, fell upon him with a club, and meant to kill him. Providence, however, and his sacred blood once more stood his friend. Some ladies passing by, 'moved with compassion for one who was of antient and valuable extraction in the county,' begged the Fairy to spare him, and again he escaped with a beating.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Other accounts confirm Sullivan's account of the state of Killarney.

The O'Donoghue was Donell Mahony's son-in-law. Richard Hedges, writing in 1714 to Secretary Dawson, says, 'The Protestants in Killarney (besides those linked to the O'Donoghue) don't exceed a dozen. Four of them are in the county adjacent. The justices of the peace in these parts are Doctor Bland, Francis Brewster, and Wm. Griffin, Esq. Dr. Bland lives in a thatched house (a security for his good behaviour); Mr. Brewster in Glenflesk is neighbour to the O'Donoghue and their clan; Mr. Griffin is almost a single man, and often from home. These justices, as well as the other Protestants, are in terror of their persons. I'll give you two instances. Old O'Donoghue told Mr. Griffin to his face, that he hoped soon to see the time that he and his would pull out his throat, and often brags that he has 500 men at his command.

George Eager, having committed an affray in Killarney, was sent for by Dr. Bland and another justice, who, admonishing him for his breach of the law, he replied to the

other justice that if 'twere not for the respect he had to some of the company, he would beat him with a great cudgel he brandished in his hand as long as his stick would last, and called him many opprobrious names.' *Mr. Eager was soon after made high constable.*—'R. Hedges to Secretary Dawson, August 14, 1714.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

In 1729, the year after Sullivan was in the town, Lord Fitzmaurice writes from Ross Castle:—

'The robberies that are daily committed in the neighbourhood of this place on persons of all ranks are so extravagant, that a man's entire substance shall be taken away in one night by persons that carry skenes and pocket pistols always about them. These persons are continually in riots, and frequently fire numbers of pistols in the night time in Killarney. But though I have heard this myself, yet I could not find a man that would help me to bring these lawless people to justice, they being all Papists that carry these weapons of offence, as well as those whose assistance I asked. All these persons are protected by different clans here.' *Ibid.*



Unable to leave Killarney from his lameness, Sullivan now applied for protection to the magistrates. He found the magistrates either unable to help him, or too much implicated with the smugglers themselves to be willing to interfere. So making the best of a bad matter, he pretended repentance, addressed himself to Pat Kelly, whom he offered to assist in his school, and being a Sullivan he was at last forgiven, and taken into partnership.

Killarney at this time was the Catholic University of Ireland. The law which forbade the Catholics to open schools was observed as little as the law for the expulsion of the regular clergy; but it was most conveniently defied in counties like Kerry, where law was in abeyance altogether, and Protestants and Catholics were combined, from reasons of their own, to manage the administration on independent principles.

There was a person holding an important office at this time in the neighbourhood of Killarney, who will be heard of again, a character who deserves the particular attention of the student of Irish history.

The Rev. Francis Lawder was Vicar General of the diocese of Limerick, and the chief judge in the Bishop's Consistory Court. This gentleman had given the smuggling transactions his most careful attention. He was himself deeply concerned in the trade. He had studied the conditions under which it could be made to thrive in greatest security. According to

Sullivan's story, he had not only winked at, but encouraged, the establishment of the Killarney Catholic schools, to prevent the intrusion of English ideas, and to strengthen the system under which the affairs of the county were carried on. The education being his peculiar province, his eye was soon drawn on Sullivan. He recognized him as a dangerous person of whom it was desirable to rid the neighbourhood, and was already casting about for means to dispose of him. Finding himself in the very hotbed of the contraband trade which he had come to Ireland to expose, Sullivan, notwithstanding his danger, seems to have determined to stick to Killarney, and to gain favour at the Castle by real service. It is hardly conceivable, notwithstanding the sore leg, that he could not have left it if he had wished. But his game was an extremely dangerous one. He was safe on one side by connecting himself with the Fairies; but the Vicar-General was an antagonist of another creed. The Vicar-General, who saw through him, could order his arrest as a teacher in a Catholic school. To meet attack on this side he presented himself in the parish church of Killarney as a convert from Popery, and was formally received into the Establishment. He was unaware as yet that the Vicar-General and the Fairies were such close allies as he found them. Donell Mahony himself had become a nominal Protestant to qualify himself to hold the Shelburne lease. Protestantism of this kind was understood and laughed at. But Sullivan was mistaken in supposing that his own conformity would

be endured as easily. No sooner was it announced that he had changed his religion, than the rage of the town burst out again. Pat Kelly, his partner, waylaid him in the street with 'an unmerciful cutlass,' and threatened to run him through the body. He pretended that he dared not leave the town for fear he should be followed and killed. If he stayed he was like to fare no better. He did not venture a second appeal to the magistrates, for the magistrates, he had learnt already, were in league with the wool-runners. To complete the absurdity of the picture, in the midst of all this lawlessness there was a garrison of soldiers at Ross Castle, not a mile distant from the town, under the command of Lord Fitzmaurice, the eldest son of the Earl of Kerry. To Lord Fitzmaurice, as his last chance, Sullivan now applied, and declared that he was in danger of his life from Pat Kelly and his cutlass. Fitzmaurice was one of the Protestants who, for 'the odd reasons' alluded to by the Castle Secretary, were not much to be relied on. He looked his visitor sternly in the face, and told him that 'Kerry did not love informers.' At last, with much difficulty, he issued a warrant for Kelly's arrest. The High Constable, Mr. George Eager (who had recommended himself for his office by threatening to break his cudgel on a magistrate's back in his own court) insisted that the warrant could not be executed. Mr. Donell Mahony appeared on the scene immediately after, with all Killarney howling at his back, and offered bail for Kelly, which Fitzmaurice at once accepted. The unfortunate Sullivan

was turned out of Ross Castle among the mob, who received him with yells of spy and informer, hunted him to his house, and serenaded him from below his window 'with execrations and blasphemies against the Church of England and its ministers.' The blood of the O'Sullivans had so far saved him from the worst extremity. Now, however, he says it was decided that he must die. The execution of a descendant of a noble Irish house was only to be performed by a Milesian of equal rank; and MacCartymore, the landless chief of the MacCarties, an outlaw given in his bankrupt condition to drink, already liable to hanging for other crimes, and to whom an extra sin would be of no consequence, was pitched upon to put him out of the world.

Either MacCarty could not be brought to the point, or Fitzmaurice gave the smugglers to understand that Sullivan, being an emissary of Government, they must stop short of extremities, and the idea of murder was postponed till other methods had first been tried. One night, when he was in his bed, Pat Kelly and the Fairies broke in, seized him, tied him hand and foot, and bore him off to a lonely house outside the town. His pocket-book, with Walpole's pass in it, was taken from him; and the next morning he was carried before a bench of magistrates, consisting of the Rev. Francis Lawder, Sir Maurice Crosby of Ardfert, Lord Fitzmaurice's brother-in-law, and David Barry, seneschal of the Ross 'Manor Court.' Mr. Lawder took the charge of the case, and addressed the prisoner with meritorious frankness.

‘You rogue,’ he said; ‘do you think to get justice against the county of Kerry gentlemen who are all of a knot, and baffle the very judges on the circuit? You are mistaken. Our words are taken by the Government before the depositions of a thousand witnesses who have no friends to back them. I wonder you would be so mad as to enterprise the like affair! Were you not afraid to be knocked on the head? My friend, this is not France; this is Kerry, where we do as we please. We’ll teach you some Kerry law, which is to give no right, and take no wrong.’

The offence alleged was that Sullivan was a returned convict. His identity with the transported schoolmaster was not denied, and the passport being safe in Pat Kelly’s keeping, Lawder ironically asked him whether he had received permission to come back to Ireland. He pleaded that his papers had been stolen. The magistrates threatened to have him flung out of the window for insolence. The creature was not deficient in courage. Being in extremity, as he afterwards declared, and expecting no mercy, he turned on the Vicar-General and asked him ‘how it would be taken by the Government, if a clergyman and a magistrate was found to have employed a Rapparee to assault and kidnap a new convert who had just read his public recantation before the Rev. Mr. Bland, and the congregation.’

The Vicar-General seemingly paid no attention, but wrote out his committal as a returned Papist, and passed him over to the constable to take to Tralee gaol.

The magistrates, however, hesitated before completing so glaring a piece of impertinence. Sullivan was confined for a few days at a private house in Killarney, and was then turned out of doors, with the advice to leave Ireland as fast as he could, and a promise that, if he betrayed what had befallen him to the Government, he should be promptly killed.

Being, as he said, 'invincibly persuaded' that this was true, he lay quiet in his lodging for two or three months. He was closely watched, but the evident tenderness for the Sullivan name and extraction again befriended him. He ventured gradually to show himself in the streets again, and at last reopened his school, where, having a reputation for learning, he gathered a knot of students about him; amongst others another young Connell of Iveragh, named Maurice.

Among these lads he contrived to ingratiate himself. Some of them were strangers from other parts of the country, unconnected with the Kerry faction, and valued Sullivan for the learning which he was really able to give them.<sup>1</sup> His classes were well filled, and the informer was forgotten in the professor, when the unlucky arrival in the town of a heavy cargo of smuggled brandy rekindled the smouldering exasperation. Once more he was waylaid, knocked down, and

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<sup>1</sup> A young McLaughlin, for instance, from Ardagh, co. Longford, who was examined afterwards at the Castle in connexion with Sullivan's story, said that, 'living in a place inconvenient to good teachers, and hearing a famous character of the teachers of Kerry, he had repaired to Killarney to the school of Sylvester O'Sullivan, professor of various sciences.'—*MSS.* Dublin Castle, 1728.

beaten. He escaped into his school-room, where the boys took his side, barricaded the door and windows, and beat off the mob who continued howling outside ; when Fitzmaurice, resolved, once for all, to be rid of a nuisance which had grown intolerable, sent a warrant for his instant appearance at Ross Castle.

Sullivan says, that Fitzmaurice desired that he should be torn to pieces in the riot, under circumstances which could be represented as accidental. The suspicion was so far justified that no escort of soldiers was sent to conduct him down. Fitzmaurice was disappointed however, if this was his object, by the fidelity of the students who attended their master as a bodyguard.

To expose the alleged occasion of a disturbance in the stocks, in the middle of the mob, would not have been considered, out of Ireland, a hopeful method of appeasing it. This, however, was the remedy which suggested itself to the Governor of Ross Castle. He sentenced Sullivan to sit in that position for two hours, in Killarney market-place. 'Sullivan made his humble demonstration, that he was known to be descended from a noble, antient, and valuable family in the county.' The better the blood, in the opinion of Lord Fitzmaurice, the deeper the disgrace. The prisoner was taken back for the sentence to be executed—the stocks were prepared—'evil persons' were filling their pockets with stones, to make an end of him as soon as he was secured. Once more the faithful students came to the rescue. The stocks were upset and broken in

pieces ; Sullivan was hurried away in the dusk to some temporary hiding-place ; and that night young Maurice Connell, a young McLaughlin of Ardagh, in Longford, and two other lads, conducted him, by byeways and paths, over the mountains out of Kerry ; never leaving him till they had seen him safe in Dublin, where he told his singular story at the Castle.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Examination of Sylvester O'Sullivan, 1728. MSS. Dublin Castle. Maurice Connell and McLaughlin were examined as well as O'Sullivan, and, so far as their knowledge went, his account is confirmed by theirs.'



## SECTION IV.

ON the most superficial insight into the condition of  
 1728 three out of the four provinces of Ireland, the  
 contrast between the laws on the statute-book  
 and the living reality is more than grotesque. The  
 Ireland of theory was law-ridden beyond any country  
 in Europe. The Ireland of fact was without any law  
 at all, save what was recognized by the habits of each  
 district and county. The forms of English jurisdiction  
 were admitted only when the chicanery of local attor-  
 neys could abuse them for Irish purposes. The Pro-  
 testant magistrates, who were the nominal rulers over  
 the Catholics, were as powerless as if they were dead,  
 when they set themselves in opposition to Catholic  
 prejudices. The Protestant gentry, clergymen as well  
 as laymen, were rather driven to purchase toleration  
 for themselves by adopting the manners of those  
 among whom their lot was cast, than to stir sleeping  
 dogs by struggling against the stream. The Castle  
 government was best pleased when there was the  
 least disturbance, and assumed that all was well when  
 its composure was unruffled by complaints. Donell  
 Mahony might rule in Kerry, or Martin of Ballinahinch  
 in Connemara. The O'Donoghue might threaten one  
 magistrate on the bench with a visit from five hundred  
 Rapparees; the high-constable of Killarney might tell  
 another, that he would have broken his staff on his

head 'save out of respect for the rest of the company.' Such things might be, but the Government desired to hear as little as they might of evidences of administrative weakness. Soldiers might be quartered a few rods off; but the soldiers were so ostentatiously indifferent, that they must have been ordered at all hazards to avoid unpleasant collisions. What could magistrates do so circumstanced, but, since they were forbidden to force the people to submit to the law, submit the law and ultimately their own manners, and sympathies, and characters to the ways of the people? A story, told by an informer like Sylvester O'Sullivan, would, by itself, have been an insufficient witness to the habits of the gentlemen of the South of Ireland. Another incident, almost exactly contemporary, a matter which became at last of international consequence, and was made the subject of judicial investigation, exhibits the country in the same aspect of lawlessness; and one at least of the same parties—the Vicar-General of the diocese—in a position which singularly confirms O'Sullivan's account of him.

Ballyhige House, or Castle, the seat of a younger branch of the family of Crosby, stands at the northern extremity of the Bay of Tralee. The sand and powdered shells, which form the bed of the Atlantic, are swept in by the eddying tides behind Kerry Head, and lie for miles as a fringe upon the shore. The shoals reach far to the sea, and the rollers with a north-west wind break over them in sheets of yellow foam. Blown sand-heaps, covered with long pale

grass, and burrowed by rabbits, divide the beach from the brown morass which stretches inland over the level plain. At the north end of the sands where the ground rises out of the bog is the castle, which was the scene of the following story:—

The Crosbies of Kerry were descended from John Crosbie, who in 1600 was made Bishop of Ardfert by Queen Elizabeth. The Bishop bought estates in the country, which his son increased by good management and a judicious alliance. Sir Thomas, his grandson, a staunch loyalist, was knighted by Ormond. He was twice married, and left behind him eight sons and one daughter. Daniel Crosbie, the eldest, inherited the family property at Ardfert. From him it passed to Sir Maurice, who married a Fitzmaurice, a daughter of Lord Kerry, and, at the time to which our story relates, was member for the county in the Irish Parliament. Sir Maurice, it will be remembered, was one of the magistrates before whom Sylvester O'Sullivan was brought at Killarney. Thomas Crosbie, Sir Maurice's uncle, the eldest son of Sir Thomas by his second marriage, succeeded to the estates at Ballyhige, which had belonged to his mother. Like the rest of the family he was a fierce High Churchman,<sup>1</sup> and sate with the Knight of Kerry for the borough of Dingle.

<sup>1</sup> 'Those of the Old Church, which they call the High one, are in expectation that either Mr. Meredith, a very honest English gentleman, or Mr. Crosbie, of Ballyhige, are pricked as sheriffs by my Lord Chief Justice, because they were never yet sheriffs, and that they are High Churchmen to their hilts, and great champions for that cause in this county.'—'Maurice Hussey to Secretary Dawson, 1710.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

He too had married into the peerage, his wife, Lady Margaret, being sister of the Earl of Barrymore.

Another Crosbie, a cousin William, was member for Ardfert. Arthur, a cousin also, was Commissioner of the Customs, and had a son who married a daughter of Lord Mornington, the Honourable Fanny Wesley or Wellesley.

The family, which was thus highly connected, became the actors in one of the most remarkable episodes of Irish history in the last cen-<sup>1729</sup> tury; and the story of it illustrates how much could be ventured with impunity in that country by persons who commanded so many votes in the Parliament.

Ballyhige was at this time a long straggling house, built low to avoid the storms, and thatched, which was a proof of confidence in the people, and a sign that the owner had no reason to fear incendiaries. On the east side was a large fruit and kitchen garden; on the west, attached by a wall to the main building, was a square stone fire-proof tower of unknown antiquity. Between the house and the sea there had been run up a set of cabins forming a court or quadrangle, and occupied by workmen; for Mr. Crosbie, being a man of enterprise, had erected a linen factory there, and was doing a thriving business, with a Scotchman named Dalrymple for a foreman. Behind the factory the ground sloped away to the sand-hills, and thence to the shore.

It so happened that, in the autumn of the year 1728, a Danish East Indiaman, the 'Golden Lion,' having on board twelve chests of silver bullion, which

she was bringing home from the East, was driven by foul weather into the Bay of Tralee.<sup>1</sup> The wind falling round to the north-west, and blowing dead on the land, she was unable to extricate herself, and at five in the morning of the 28th of October she grounded, in the shallow water, half a mile from shore. She had eighty-eight men on board, and she carried twenty-two guns. When first seen the evening before the wreck, she had been taken for a privateer. Her character and the value of her cargo, however, were very soon known. As the tide went back a mob of wreckers and smugglers assembled, who, under pretence of giving help, would have soon disabled and overwhelmed the confined and half-drowning crew. But Mr. Crosbie turned out with his servants and workmen, drove away the people, assisted the captain and sailors to land with their bullion chests, and carried them into the shelter of Ballyhige. The ship was lost. All her company and everything of value which she had on board were saved.

The silver coined and in bars was worth nineteen or twenty thousand pounds.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Crosbie showed only the most honourable desire to preserve the property which had been recovered for its lawful owners. He deposited the chests in a cellar, gave the commander, Captain Heitmann, an acknowledgment for

<sup>1</sup> Local tradition says that she was tempted in by false lights. The charge rose probably from the habits of a later generation, and is certainly unjust. In the contem-

porary depositions there is not a hint of anything of the kind.

<sup>2</sup> The purchasing power of money being more than double what it is at present.

their delivery into his charge, and allowed the Danes themselves to keep guard on the place where the treasure was deposited.

The exposure on the morning of the wreck was unfortunately fatal to him. He caught a severe cold from standing in the water, and being an old man he died in a few weeks. A claim was put in for salvage by his executors, seemingly exaggerated, for in December an order was sent from Dublin Castle to the Tralee Custom House to protect the Danes from extortion; but, until the question was settled, they were not permitted to remove the treasure, and Captain Heitmann was made uneasy at the tone in which the subject was talked of in the county. Mr. Crosbie's funeral drew together a crowd from all parts of the neighbourhood. The Irish were present there in overwhelming numbers, and their general tone was reckless and menacing. The rejection of the salvage claims had been resented in the household, and the servants' ideas on rights of property were evidently loose. The Captain at last asked Lady Margaret to make over to him the detached stone tower, in which he could lodge his seamen, and have the treasure with him under the same roof. Lady Margaret refused. She wanted one at least, she said, of the rooms in the tower for her own purposes. She permitted the chests, however, to be buried in the tower cellar in a position unknown to any one except her butler. The hole was filled in with broken glass and crockery, and earth was thrown over it. The greater number of the crew went away. Ten

or twelve who remained were lodged in the tower garret; a sentinel was stationed at the door at the foot of the staircase; while Captain Heitmann himself continued Lady Margaret's guest in the castle itself.

The months passed on; spring followed winter. The salvage difficulty could not be settled, and the unusual presence in Kerry of so large a quantity of money, over the ownership of which meanwhile some uncertainty was supposed to hang, set the whole county in agitation.

The name of the Vicar-General of the diocese now re-appears. The Rev. Francis Lawder resided but a few miles from Ballyhige. Towards the middle of April, Mr. Lawder's steward was superintending a party of labourers, who were thrashing out corn, when a stranger entered the barn and whispered something to the steward, who went away with him. The same evening the steward told the labourers that there was a plan on foot to carry off the Danes' treasure, and asked if they cared to take a part in it. The exploit was tempting; but whether it might be safely ventured depended on the opinion of the county. If all ranks were implicated, none would be punished; a small party would be discovered and hanged. They asked whether the gentry approved. The steward answered that all the gentry had consented, except the Earl of Kerry who had not been consulted. They had promised either to be present themselves, or else to send their servants.

To men to whom smuggling had become a second

nature, chests of bullion recovered out of the sea had lost the character of private property; and the hesitation in paying the Crosbies' salvage claims removed the scruples of the waverers. What, however, did Lady Margaret think about it? Lady Margaret was the great person of the neighbourhood. Lady Margaret's supposed rights were the legal groundwork of the proceeding, and, without her leave, the lowest Rapparee would not stir. The Ballyhige butler, Mr. Banner, was taken into council. Banner was instructed to inform his mistress that, if she would give the word, the thing should be done, and a third or half the spoil should be her ladyship's share. Lady Margaret was neither better nor worse than other ladies and gentlemen in the county; she could not live in an atmosphere of lawlessness without contracting something of the same temperament. Had she spoken her real thoughts she would have answered like young Pompey—

This thou shouldst have done,  
And not have spoke on't. Being done unknown,  
I should have found it afterwards well done,  
But must condemn it now.

When the butler delivered his message, she affected great displeasure. She would not hear of it, she said. She would rather lose her own life than allow the Danes to be robbed under her roof. She spoke decisively, yet something in her manner indicated a less fixed resolution. The butler inferred that, so long as she was not herself compromised, she would not be unforgiving. The report which he carried back



was sufficient. The plot gathered shape, stole into the general air, and was whispered in hall and cabin. The steward, who was a practised hand, and knew that in such matters there was nothing more dangerous than delay, collected, as he considered, a sufficient force on the spot, and one midnight, with forty men with blacked faces, and armed with guns and pick-axes, he stole up through the sand-hills, and sent a boy into the house to tell the butler that the people were come.

It happened that Mr. Arthur Crosbie, Lady Margaret's nephew, was that night a guest at Ballyhige. Mr. Arthur was clerk of the Crown for the county, and might be held exceptionally responsible. He must, of course, have been taken generally into confidence, and have given a general approval, but he was unprepared for such sudden action. The butler ran to his room and woke him. He said, 'he would not for any consideration the thing should be done while he was in the house; as soon as he was gone he did not care what they did.' The butler, with much difficulty, persuaded the gang to withdraw for that night and to wait for another opportunity. Arthur Crosbie departed, but it seemed now as if Lady Margaret's own mind misgave her. Eager conspirators continued to flit about the house and gossip with the servants. The Vicar-General's men were in haste to be at work. The Ballyhige house steward assured Lady Margaret from him that she should have her part secured, and it would be more than she would

get from the Danes. He told her that the attempt would certainly be made, indeed had all but been made already.

Lady Margaret still wavered. 'She seemed to abhor the thought of it,' or it might be that she only abhorred the officiousness which thrust an unwelcome privity upon her. She desired and did not desire; approved and disapproved. She, perhaps, wished to escape the temptation, and, by an effort of honesty, to place the prize out of her reach. A day or two after the first attempt she sent for one of the Danish officers, called him into a private room, and told him that the treasure was in danger. She bade him ask Captain Heitmann if he was satisfied with the place in which it was bestowed, and she offered, if he preferred it, to keep the chests in her own bed-room. Captain Heitmann said that the dwelling-house being thatched, and therefore liable to be fired, he thought they were safer in the tower. The officer carried back the answer. Lady Margaret gave so odd a smile that he was led to ask, how she knew that there were ill designs on foot. In his own country, he said, persons revealing intended crimes were brought before a magistrate, and examined upon oath. If she had serious grounds for suspicion there ought to be a similar enquiry.

Lady Margaret said that this was not the custom in Ireland. Information might be given privately, but gentlemen did not like their names to be made public. In fact, she could say no more, but she desired to let

him understand generally that mischief was in the wind.

The Danes knew not what to make of information so ambiguously given. They were strangers; most of them understood no language but their own: one or two spoke English imperfectly, and Irish not at all.<sup>1</sup> But they naturally assumed, that in the English dominions, and under the English Flag, they were in a country which respected the first principles of law. Similar warnings continued to reach them: the butler's wife told them one day they ought to be much obliged to her husband; half-a-hundred villains had come to the house one night, to make away with them, and but for Mr. Banner, they would have been all murdered, and the treasure taken away. She too, perhaps, like her mistress, wished them to take precautions which should make the robbery impossible; but they only laughed at her. In the house of the sister of a peer and the widow of a member of Parliament they refused to believe that they could be really in danger. She left them, they said afterwards, 'very angry.'

The affair was by this time whispered over the whole country-side, and, among others, reached the ears of Mr. Collis, the vicar of Tralee. Mr. Collis had not perhaps been long enough in Kerry to outgrow his prejudices. He was stopped on a Sunday afternoon in the middle of May, by one of his parishioners, who said that he desired to consult him. The twelve chests of silver at Ballyhige were about to be carried off and

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<sup>1</sup> The captain's deposition is in Latin.

divided : Lady Margaret was to have four of them ; four were for the gentlemen of the county ; the four remaining were to be shared among the party who were to execute the robbery. He had himself, he said, been invited to join, and he wished to know whether it was robbery in the real sense of the word, and whether it was an act which the vicar would approve. Collis, astonished and shocked, told him that it was a monstrous piece of wickedness, and that, at all hazards, it must be prevented. He was unable to conceive that a person in Lady Margaret's position could herself be an accomplice ; and not being himself acquainted with her, he desired a gentleman of Tralee, whom he knew to visit at Ballyhige, to let her know what was going on. The gentleman promised to tell her, but he understood Kerry better than the vicar of Tralee, and put it off from day to day. Collis himself at last rode over to Ballyhige, had an interview with Lady Margaret, and told her frankly that officious friends of her own, under pretence of doing her the justice which the Danes refused, were about to commit a frightful crime in her supposed interest.

Lady Margaret was polite but unsatisfactory. She expressed 'a great dislike' to the idea, but had evidently not realized the criminality of it. She said that she would speak to Captain Heitmann, and that the chests should be removed to her own room. It would have been more to the purpose if she had proposed to send them to the gaol or barracks at Tralee. Collis left Ballyhige with more misgivings than he

had brought with him. He endeavoured to impress upon her before he went, that, besides robbery, there would be bloodshed and probably murder; and he seriously entreated her to forbid an act, which a word from her, spoken decidedly, would certainly prevent. Lady Margaret's conscience was again moved. She sent once more for the officer to whom she had spoken before. Her present informant she was able to name. Mr. Collis, of Tralee, she said, had told her that a robbery would certainly be attempted. A second time she suggested that the chests should be removed to the dwelling-house and placed under her personal charge.

Her object probably was less to prevent the robbery than to prevent a collision between the Danes and the Vicar-General's gang. The officer was still incredulous, that an act of open violence would be ventured upon strangers in the house of a gentleman of fortune, full of servants, with a linen factory swarming with workmen not a hundred yards distant. He was perhaps less satisfied that, if the chests were transferred from their present position, they might not mysteriously disappear. He declined to let them be removed. He took the precautions of placing a second sentinel at the turret door during the night. He again begged Lady Margaret to let the Danes have the turret to themselves, and asked that some of his own ship's muskets, which were in the castle, with ball and powder, might be served out to his men. The first request Lady Margaret declined; it would

be inconvenient, she said, and she could not allow it. After some delay, eight or ten muskets were sent over, and some balls, but, under one pretext or another, no powder was sent with them.

Even yet the unfortunate Danes were not seriously alarmed. The officers and seven sailors slept in the upper rooms in the turret. One of the servants occupied the apartment on the ground-floor, so that they were unable to barricade the door. They kept careful watch, however; and Captain Heitmann had so far seen no reason to move his quarters from the dwelling house and remain with his men.

Lady Margaret meanwhile had given her definite consent, and in keeping back the powder she trusted that she had taken sufficient precautions to prevent bloodshed. Everybody in the house was now in the secret. Mr. Thomas Hassett<sup>1</sup> came to stay at Ballyhige with a number of servants. They were all taken into confidence. Several other gentlemen's servants were in attendance; their presence was the price they were made to pay for their share of the booty. The preparations were made with the utmost deliberation. A sloop was brought round into the bay to be at hand in case of sudden danger. The house steward sent the wheel-barrows and truckles, which were in the yard, to be repaired, that they might be in condition to bear a heavy load. Mr. Lawder's servants put in readiness his horses and carts. The night of the fourth of June was fixed on for the attack. The gang were to come

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Benner or Blennerhassett.

up as before from the sea, through the sand-hills. The servants undertook that they should find all gates and doors unlocked.

No fresh warning was allowed to the Danes. The officer in the turret had gone to bed, and was asleep. He was awoke at midnight by a sound of shots. A moment after one of his men was at his bedside, wounded and bleeding. The two sentries had been suddenly fired on, and had both been killed. Peterson, the wounded man, who had been with them, had dragged himself up the stairs, securing behind him the door which divided the upper and lower stories. The officer sprung up and flew with the rest to the leads. He saw the court below swarming with armed men, with guns and torches. By the flaming light he recognized one of the Crosbie family, and more than one of the household. The Danes had but a pair of pistols and one gun with them, and no ammunition for a second charge. To fire would be to throw away their lives uselessly, so they remained behind the parapets, watching the robbers' proceedings.

Captain Heitmann, in the dwelling-house, had in a like manner been roused by the uproar. He too had darted out of bed, and had run down to the hall, where he found the family assembled. He went to the door to open it. Lady Margaret threw herself in his way, and implored him not to stir, as he would be killed. He asked if she would not send some one down to rouse the factory hands. She said it was impossible. In fact they were already roused and were at work in

the court with the rest. He appealed to the servants. No one stirred. He appealed to Mr. Hassett. Mr. Hassett sate still and made no reply. If he went out alone, he feared they would lock the door behind him, and leave him to be murdered. He flung himself, in despair, upon a bench, and sate helplessly listening to the yells and cries in the court.

The turret door meanwhile was wide open; the cellar floor was torn up; the earth and broken bottles were cleared away, and the twelve chests were lifted out to be distributed, according to the arrangement. Beforehand the division had appeared easy. Lady Margaret was to have a third, the gentlemen a third, and the robbers a third; but the question now rose, who were the gentlemen, and who were the robbers? Were the Ballyhige servants to be paid out of their mistress's share, or out of the share of the Vicar-General's gang? The butler, the footman, the coachman, a young David Crosbie, the Scotch factory foreman, and six or seven others, all insisted that they had borne their part in the robbery, and were entitled to their part of the robbers' portion; at last they laid hold on six of the chests, and tried to carry them off. A fight began, which, had there been time to finish it, would have diminished the number of the claimants; but the grey June morning was already breaking, and for Lady Margaret's sake it was essential to prevent daylight from overtaking them before they had finished their work. A rough partition was effected: the Ballyhige party secured what they had seized; Lady



Margaret's four chests were buried in the garden ; two were broken up and the contents rudely divided ; and the ' Dolphin ' sloop sailed in the morning, with young David Crosbie and several others, who had staggered down to the shore loaded with money-bags. The six remaining chests were taken off in carts to the Vicar-General's barn. One cart broke down on the way. There was no time to repair it : the chest was opened by the roadside, and ' the scum,' as the rank-and-file of the gang were called, received their wages in handfuls of silver. Mr. Lawder's proctor had marked three, which he intended to secrete ; perhaps for private and careful distribution at leisure ; but the other parties interested were impatient or suspicious. Mr. Arthur Crosbie's steward came over a day or two after to enquire after the gentlemen's shares, and intimated ' that it would be worse for those concerned, if they were not sent.' Servants came on horseback, who filled their hats and their pockets ; and thus, in a short time, the whole disappeared.

The strangest part of the story has now to be told. Even in Kerry it was not expected that an exploit of this kind could be passed over without a show of enquiry. The day after the robbery, Lady Margaret sent word to Mr. Chester, chief collector of the revenue, that her house had been broken into and the Danish silver stolen. Her son and her servants, she said, had attempted to trace the perpetrators, but had failed in discovering them.

The son, who was a mere lad, was not likely to dis-

cover them. Lady Margaret, perhaps, hoped that the excuse would be accepted, but the affair had been on too large a scale. The leading magistrates in the county were Sir Maurice Crosbie, county member and high sheriff; William Crosbie, member for Ardfert; Mr. Blennerhassett, Edmund Denny, and the Knight of Kerry. Mr. Blennerhassett, if not related to the Hassett who was an accomplice, certainly assisted afterwards in suppressing investigation. The Crosbies' first duty was to their own family. The Knight had too many transactions of his own with the smugglers to be able to exert himself if he had wished. Mr. Denny could not act alone in a matter which might bring him into deadly feud with his neighbours. The robbery was on the night of the 4th of June. A week passed. No arrests had been made, and no steps taken. On the 15th there came a sharp reprimand from Dublin from Mr. Lingen, the first commissioner of the Customs. The Government, Mr. Lingen said, were at a loss to understand such extraordinary remissness in an affair of so much consequence. The magistrates were commanded to exert themselves instantly to recover the money, and 'prevent the damage which would otherwise fall on the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.'

For decency's sake it was necessary to do something, but something which should furnish no clue to the real perpetrators. A man named Anderson, who had not been concerned, was taken up, and sent to Dublin to be examined. Anderson pleaded his own innocence, and of course there was no evidence against

him. He could not call himself wholly ignorant of what everyone knew ; but when pressed by Sir Edward Southwell, the principal secretary, for the names of the parties guilty, he said, that he could mention no one in particular ' unless he named the whole commonalty on that side of the county of Kerry.'

If the commonalty were all implicated there was, at least, the Earl of Kerry, the lord-lieutenant of the county. Carteret, the then viceroy, was in England. The Lords Justices, Archbishop Boulter, and the Speaker, Conolly, wrote in real indignation to require the Earl to bring the offenders to justice, and compel them to restore their plunder. Lord Kerry himself promised to do his best. His own hands were clean, and, for himself, he had nothing to conceal ; but he acknowledged, frankly, that there would be great difficulty. He could expect no help from the magistrates. The money, he feared, was beyond recovery.

His son, Lord Fitzmaurice, if his behaviour at Killarney was a specimen of his general conduct, was probably less scrupulous than his father. On Lord Fitzmaurice and the Earl, however, the responsibility was now thrown so seriously that they could not evade it. The steward and the butler at Ballyhige were arrested, threatened with the gallows, and frightened into full confessions ; but, the more they confessed, the more perplexing the situation became. The first families in the county ; high officials in Church and State ; members of Parliament who had votes, and who required to be conciliated ; the Earl of Kerry's

own kindred, for Sir Maurice Crosbie was his son-in-law; the whole county side, as Anderson truly said, were implicated. There was no longer a difficulty in getting at the truth. Captain Heitmann and his officers gave their evidence. The Ballyhige servants made a clean breast of it. The Vicar-General's servants, seeing concealment useless, were as plainspoken as the rest. Mr. Collis, of Tralee, deposed to his conversation with Lady Margaret. The depositions were sent to the Castle, and Lingen returned Lord Kerry his hearty thanks, 'for having unravelled such an enormous piece of villany, which was now set in the truest light.'

But the difficulty now was the truth itself. There had not been robbery only, but murder, and murder of a dastardly kind—murder of two shipwrecked foreign seamen—in violation of the sacred rights of hospitality. Yet no one, high or low, seemed aware of its wickedness. The origin of the crime was the utter demoralization of the gentry of an entire Irish county. Those who, by the constitution, were the natural governors of the people, were their leaders in depravity. They, if any, ought to have been selected for punishment.

The public trial and execution of an earl's sister, a vicar-general of the Irish Establishment, and a member or two of the Irish Legislature, would have been an example that would have lifted forward the civilization of Kerry by three-quarters of a century.

But the days of George the Second and Sir Robert

Walpole were not the days of Cromwell. The judges came to Tralee on their summer circuit, and the assizes were opened at Tralee. One or two of the gang were tried and sentenced; but the Earl of Kerry pleaded justly, 'that it would be small service to the county to let the poor rogues be hanged, while the principals escaped.' The judges shared Lord Kerry's opinion, or, when they came into the county, they assumed the habits of thought which prevailed there. If no one was to be punished, an effort might at least be made to recover the plunder. Here the apathetic magistrates affected a real zeal, and gave the concluding touch of the grotesqueness of the picture. Since they were not wanted for the gallows, there could be no longer a reason for detaining the prisoners. The Knight of Kerry had written generally to Mr. Lingen, that he knew of persons who, if assured of pardon, would assist in discovering the money. Lingen replied with general encouragement; and under the shelter of Lingen's letter, and pretending to be acting by order of the Government—the Knight, Sir Maurice Crosbie, Mr. Blennerhassett, and two other magistrates—signed an order to the governor of Tralee gaol to release the Vicar-General's servants, the most prominent of the actual perpetrators of the crime; and to two of these persons—one of them the steward who had planned the robbery and divided the plunder, they committed the recovery of it from hands of those among whom it had been distributed. No choice could have been better if there had been a real desire to find

the money, but the object was merely to turn ridicule on the whole affair. The released prisoners strutted about the county showing their commissions amidst universal amusement, saying openly, that if the thing had been still to do they would do it again, and parading the protections which they professed to have received from the Castle.

If the most notorious villains were selected for special favour, those who had promoted the investigation became naturally alarmed for themselves. The Earl of Kerry wrote to the Castle, that he expected nightly to have his house burnt over his head. On his own authority he re-arrested the two scoundrels who had been thus ridiculously pardoned. Lingen wrote in towering indignation to the Knight. The Kerry gentry should not be allowed to carry matters with so insolent a hand. For decency's sake they were forced to undertake an appearance of a real search for the money, and hopes were held out from time to time that the greater part would soon be collected.

Unfortunately for the Irish Administration there was a party in the case which declined to be satisfied with mere restitution. Two Danish subjects had been killed, and a third wounded. The Copenhagen Government, when Captain Heitmann's report reached them, insisted not only that the stolen silver should be restored, but that the guilty persons should be brought to justice. Walpole felt or affected a proper displeasure. He admitted that England's honour was con-

cerned in punishing crime, and gave Carteret orders to prosecute. He discovered that a mode of administering justice, which may answer well among a people who have a natural love for right and abhorrence of wrong, is the worst gift which can be bestowed on those who do not know what justice means. Carteret set in motion the usual machinery. A hundred obstructions were at once flung in the way. Arthur Crosbie, the clerk of the Crown, was at last actually tried in Dublin. The Danes remained in Ireland to give evidence. The confessions of the Ballyhige servants proved as plainly as possible that he knew what was about to be done, and that neither by word nor deed had he attempted to prevent it. Yet the judge summed up in favour of the prisoner, and the jury acquitted him. Captain Heitmann complained indignantly 'that the judges were in a conspiracy to suppress the enquiry;' that 'they showed partiality to shield the Crosbies.' The judges answered, 'that Mr. Arthur Crosbie was acquitted for want of such proof as was according to law,' and affected to feel injured and insulted by the suspicion of favouritism.

The robbery had been committed in 1729. In 1731 Carteret retired from the viceroyalty, and as yet there had been no redress. The Kerry magistrates pretended that 9000 pounds worth of bullion had been found, and that they were ready to account for it; but three more years went by; the Danes had lingered on, besieging the Castle with their complaints, yet the Irish disliked 'paying back' as heartily as Falstaff.

They had so far not received an ounce of it. 'During all this time,' wrote the Duke of Newcastle in 1734 to Carteret's successor (the Duke of Dorset), 'the master and sailors of the "Golden Lion" have not been able to obtain satisfaction for their loss, nor restitution of the money and plate which were recovered from the persons concerned.'<sup>1</sup>

Dorset was as powerless as Carteret had been. He could but act by forms of law, and law in Ireland was organized iniquity. Again there was a delay of two years, and in January, 1736, the Danish <sup>1739</sup> minister in London laid his last remonstrance before Newcastle and the English Cabinet.

'In an affair so odious,' he said, 'every trick and stratagem has been employed to screen parties who are notoriously guilty from the punishment which they have deserved. The chief authors and accomplices of this infamous conspiracy are as well known to your Grace and to the Lords of the Council as to the whole of Ireland. Your Grace has many times expressed to me your indignation at the manner in which the Danish Company has been dealt with in that country throughout the whole affair. His Majesty, my sovereign, instructs me now to say to you, that if justice is longer refused, the Danish consul will be recalled from Dublin; and if any British vessels are so unfortunate as to be cast away hereafter on the coast of Denmark, the Irish Administration

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<sup>1</sup> 'Newcastle to the Duke of Dorset, July 17, 1734.' MSS. Record Office.



will be responsible for any misfortune which may overtake them.'<sup>1</sup>

With this letter the curtain drops on the scene. Whether the Danes went back empty-handed to their own country, forming their own reflections on the English method of civilizing Ireland, or whether the Kerry gentlemen at length unwillingly relaxed their clutch upon their prey, no evidence has as yet been discovered to show.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The Danish Minister to the Duke of Newcastle, January 3, 1736.' *MSS. Ireland.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> For the story of the Danish treasure see the Irish *MSS.* in the Record Office, from November 23, 1730, to January 3, 1736, and the depositions of the prisoners, the correspondence between the Castle and the Earl of Kerry, the evidence of Mr. Collis of Tralee, and of the

Danish officers and seamen, the letters of the judges and of the Duke of Newcastle, among the *MSS.* in the tower at Dublin. It is to be observed that the story is not mentioned in Smith's *Antiquities of Kerry*, although that book was written almost immediately after, and contains a minute and complimentary account of the Crosbie family.

## BOOK IV.

## CHAPTER I.

## EFFORTS OF THE IRISH PARLIAMENT.

## SECTION I.

**A**T that still far distant period when religious and political passion will allow a hearing to historical truth, the merits of a small section of <sup>1720</sup> resident Anglo-Irish gentlemen who, under their heavy disadvantages, refused to despair of their country, will not fail of honourable recognition. Wherever the traveller through Ireland discovers, in the midst of the wilderness, the exceptional signs of cultivation long continued—where the fields are cleared of rocks and drained and fenced, where green meadows contrast with the usual brown, where the hill-sides are clothed with thriving plantations, and the farm-buildings are of stone, and the clothes of the human inhabitants show signs of being washed and mended—there, he may assure himself, are the hoof-prints of some English family which has stood to its post through many generations. An English colonist has resided there, and his sons, and his sons' sons, after him ; and, to the

best of their ability, they have done their duty to the land and the people. Even among the colonists, however, the immense majority fell off into recklessness and waste. The peasantry took to whiskey-drinking and Whiteboyism. The squire and the squireen raced, betted, smuggled, fought, ravished, drowned themselves and their fortunes in claret, debt, and prodigality. Of those who lacked backbone to swim against the stream, but who were unable, in such an atmosphere, to find satisfaction for their ambition or their conscience, the larger number deserted their posts, and disowned all connexion with Ireland, save in the due exaction of their rents. A few fought bravely on, striving still, under hard conditions, to lift their country out of the slough, and imitate, so far as England would allow them, the forethought and industry which gave her strength to their jealous mistress.

In the first rank of this honourable body stood Swift, the Dean of St. Patrick's. It could hardly be said of Swift that he had chosen to remain in Ireland; for he, too, had the chance been allowed him, would have preferred an English rectory to the metropolitan cathedral of the miserable land of his birth. But fate had cast him there, and disdaining the tricks by which he might have flattered his way, even under Walpole and the House of Hanover, into the high places in the Church, he became, in the best and noblest sense, an Irish patriot.

Perverse as Swift was, and worse than perverse in his hatred of the Presbyterians, it was the single

crack in the clear granite of his intellect. Fettered with restrictions, robbed of her markets, blockaded round with prohibitions, he saw that, if her people were worthy of her, Ireland might still be sufficient for herself, and, out of her own resources, might develop her own industry. England might lay a veto on every healthy effort of Parliamentary legislation; but England could not touch the self-made laws which the conscience and spirit of the nation might impose upon themselves. By their own energy the Irish might still, if they chose, rise superior to their miseries, and, by their success, inflict the bitterest humiliation on their tyrant. England might close their ports, reject their tillage bills, discourage the legislative efforts for the better management of their lands; but she could not prevent them from ploughing their own fields, wearing their own frieze jerkins, and buying and selling among themselves. Excluded through his Tory connexions from all share of public business, after years of silence and personal study of the country,<sup>1</sup> the Dean, on the second rejection of the Tillage Bill, broke from his retirement, and shook the Council and the Castle secretaries with a pamphlet which no hand but his could have written.

‘Agriculture,’ he said, ‘the principal care of all wise nations, and for the encouragement of which

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<sup>1</sup> It is sometimes said that Swift had little knowledge of Ireland, and never travelled there save between Laracor and Dublin. A moderately careful examination of his writings shows that, at least with Leinster and Munster, he was intimately acquainted.

there were so many statute laws in England, was in Ireland so well countenanced, that the landlords prohibited their tenants from ploughing by penal clauses.<sup>1</sup> 'The wealth of a country was in the people whom it could raise.' 'The politic gentlemen of Ireland' 'depopulated' their estates 'for the feeding of sheep.' By England the Irish were looked on 'as if they were one of their colonies of outcasts in America.' 'Pallas, defeated in spinning by Arachne, had turned her rival into a spider.' Ireland had been dealt with yet more hardly, 'for her bowels and vitals were extracted, without allowing her even to spin and weave them.' 'Oppression,' it was said, 'made a wise man mad. The reason,' he supposed, 'why Irishmen were not mad, was because they were not wise.' 'It was to be wished, then, that oppression might teach wisdom to fools.' If Irishmen would resolve that bare Irish backs should be clothed only with Irish broadcloth, frieze, or linen; that Irish houses should be furnished with Irish stuffs and carpets, and Irish stomachs fed with home-grown corn, and ale, and milk, the money that went abroad for silks and velvets, and claret, and brandy, and the other idle luxuries of ladies and gentlemen, would set the Irish looms at work again, and supply work yet for every idle hand. The late Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. Vesey, had remarked that Ireland would never be happy till a law was made for burning everything that came from England except the people and

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<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that the object of the bill which England so long refused to sanction was to make these clauses illegal.

the coals. Swift acknowledged a strong sympathy with the Archbishop's sentiment. He urged the Irish Lords and Commons, though they could pass no Act of Parliament to such effect, yet to vote a unanimous resolution that no cloth or stuff should be used in any of their families which was not of Irish manufacture, and, setting the example themselves, stigmatize every Irishman as an enemy of his country who refused to follow it. The clergy, he said, must preach it from their pulpits. The entire nation must act upon it. One and all, 'they must agree never to appear in public wearing any single thread that came from England, till even an English staylace was thought scandalous, and a common topic for censure at tea-tables.'<sup>1</sup>

The pamphlet was anonymous, but, containing genuine fire, and the combustible matter lying thick and ready to kindle, it produced a sensation so considerable, that the Government was rash enough to order a prosecution. The author being unknown, the printer was tried for propagating sedition; and Chief Justice Whitshed, in charging the jury, laid his hand upon his breast, and swore that the object of the publication was to bring in the Pretender. This time Irish proclivities were on the side of equity and good sense. Nine times the jury returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty;' nine times they were sent back to reconsider themselves. Worn out at length, they gave a neutral verdict, leaving the printer to the judge. But the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures,' *Swift's Works*, vol. vii.

judge, on such a doubtful answer, did not venture to pass a sentence. A second trial was intended ; but wiser counsels prevailed in time to prevent another defeat, and the prosecution was dropped.

Swift meanwhile, having drawn the sword, did not mean again to sheathe it while strength and mind remained. The Drapier letters and the Copper swindle will have a section to themselves. Besides these, before and after them, he poured out tract on tract denouncing Irish misgovernment, each one of which was composed with supreme literary power, a just and burning indignation shining through the most finished irony, and played like a flash of forked lightning round the exasperated Castle politicians. In these tracts, in colours which will never fade, lies the picture of Ireland, as England, half in ignorance, half in wilful despair of her amendment, had willed that she should be. Three parts in four of the land were owned by absentees whose tenants had once been kindly dealt with, but were then ground by agents who were as hard as the most brutal resident squireen ; the manufactures were destroyed ; the plough was driven from the fallows ; the splendid timber, which a century previously had clothed plain and mountain, was swept away, was rotting in the bogs, or built into ships for strangers ; without liberty, without trade, half the profits of such wretched culture as remained were sent out of the country and spent in England ; industry was paralyzed by a million discouragements, and the population was starving in unwilling wretchedness on a soil which,

fairly treated, would support twice the number in comfort and abundance. Such was Ireland, as Swift traced it on his canvas. If she flourished, she must flourish, he said, like the Glastonbury thorn, which bloomed in midwinter. The landlords' rents were squeezed out of the blood, vitals, clothes, and dwellings of the peasants, who lived worse than English beggars; and their rulers, like Pharaoh, called them idle, and set them to make bricks without straw. In one singular paper, the most bitterly sarcastic perhaps ever written by man, he proposed, as a means of saving the children of the poor from being a burden on their parents, and of utilizing them for the public good, that at a year old they should be cooked and eaten, dwelling with prolonged refinement on the care which would then be taken to feed and fatten them, and the variety of dishes which could be composed out of their carcasses. There were few solvents which would bring Swift into the melting mood; but overcome, for once, by the piteousness of his own conception, he said he could pursue his irony no longer; and, falling back into seriousness, he again insisted on the only remedy which was left within Ireland's reach. Flanders laces, English cloth, Lyons silks, teas, coffees, chocolates, profusion of wines—these were no fit things for a country which was steeped in desolation. She was undone first by England, but next by her own pride and folly. If the landlord would plough, drain, plant, build schools, encourage home production and home consumption, discard every imported article



not necessary for health, and live as if the island had a wall of brass about it, Ireland might defy her enemies still, and rise out of her ashes.<sup>1</sup>

Swift wrote as if he thought, like Elijah, that there was none left in Ireland but himself to speak the truth; but, as with the Hebrew prophet, more of his countrymen than he knew of were thinking the same thoughts, and, so far as their power extended, were doing the things which he bade them do. England closed the door against legislative remedies; but, soon after the Dean's tracts were published, there appeared a series of 'Resolutions proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland,' which expressed rather the united purpose of many than the personal conviction of a single thinker.<sup>2</sup> 'We will live at home,' the Irish gentry were invited to say, 'we will build houses, drain, plough, and plant, and sow our estates with inhabitants. We will watch over our people'—[wonderful that it should be necessary to avow such a determination, yet it is as much forgotten now as it was then]—we will watch over our people 'as much as over our horses, bullocks, and sheep.' 'So shall we keep at home the swarms that now go to the West Indies, valued, like negroes, at thirty shillings a head.' We will no more rack our fields and waste our substance. We will be thrifty and prudent. 'We will,' adopting  
 1738 Swift's proposal, 'use no sort of clothes or furniture not of Irish manufacture; and whereas

<sup>1</sup> 'Miscellaneous Tracts on the State of Ireland,' *Swift's Works*, vol. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *Reflexions and Resolutions proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland.* Dublin, 1738.

several hundred thousand of our fellow-creatures in this island get their bread—or would, if we would let them—by spinning, weaving, and dyeing, we will come into no iniquitous fashions to beggar or starve them.<sup>1</sup> Every sixpence spent in foreign goods is robbed from our people, and is bread taken from their hungry mouths.<sup>2</sup> We will set ourselves against the smuggling. This infamous trade is a nursery for idlers, thieves, rebels, and vagabonds. It ruins the fair trader, and breaks the natural compact between the merchant and the nation.<sup>3</sup> We will educate our children, laying up in their minds the great principles of truth and honour, virtue and wisdom, love of country, and love of God and of our holy religion. We will put away these great stocks of cattle. We will cultivate our soil, and employ our people, and raise ourselves above the hazard

<sup>1</sup> The male portion of the upper classes had resolution enough for a time really to wear nothing but Irish manufacture. ‘The gentlemen of Ireland,’ says this writer, in another part of his book, ‘except some very fine gentlemen indeed, have shown their humanity and good sense in this particular. Our broadcloths have not the beauty and fineness with which they are made up in England, but we think ourselves sufficiently fine in our own feathers. If anything could lessen the charm of our Irish ladies ’tis to see them dressed out in the spoils and pillage of their country, and riding, like barbarous conquerors, great by the murder of half a nation.’

<sup>2</sup> Bad political economy, but true nevertheless; the foreign goods, it may be urged, unless paid for in gold, of which there was none in Ireland, must have been exchanged for something else, either grown or manufactured there. But, in fact, the French silks and clarets were paid for by the smuggled wool, which, being raised on sheep’s backs, gave no employment to the poor, and brought a profit only to the rich.

<sup>3</sup> The writer mentions a curious fact as to the profits of smuggling. ‘In England,’ he says, ‘the common wages for a smuggler is a guinea a day, by which means the farmers on the coast can hardly get in their harvests.’

which for ever hangs over us of famine.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in spite of all that we have suffered, we will be English; we will stand by England and the English interest; and we will hope that England will at last look favourably on us, and in time admit us to union.’<sup>2</sup>

In the same strain followed Berkeley, raised, in due time, to his natural place on the Irish bench as Bishop of Cloyne. Berkeley, who, while his promotion lingered, had been in the West Indies, and had visited France and Italy with Lord Peterborough, brought with him a more instructed insight than was possible to his untravelled countrymen. He could believe that there were ills in the world which arose from other roots than Popery. He insisted—no one insisted more emphatically—that Romish priests, if they remained in Ireland, must give securities for their allegiance, and abjure the temporal authority of the Pope; but he was not afraid to acknowledge that they had won their influence fairly, by zeal and industry, nor to invite them to use it to rouse their flocks out of their sloth and filthiness. He had seen Flanders, and Piedmont, and Lombardy, all Popish countries, cultivated like gardens. In Turin idleness was a crime, and ‘to give charity to a strolling beggar was penal.’ Berkeley urged the priests—the words sound like mockery, but they represented a real fact—‘in return

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<sup>1</sup> The writer justly insisted on the enormously improvable character which Ireland showed that she possessed whenever the chances were allowed her. ‘Between 1652 and 1673 the value of land had increased fourfold,’ he said; ‘and the exports and imports sevenfold.’

<sup>2</sup> *Reflexions and Resolutions for the People of Ireland.* Abridged.

for the lenity and indulgence of the Government,' to make themselves really useful to their countrymen, and endeavour to extirpate their habits of idleness, which were worse than infidelity.<sup>1</sup> The trade restrictions might account in part for the misery <sup>1735</sup> of Ireland, but did not account for all of it. They might ruin the middle classes, and perhaps demoralize them; but they did not directly injure the poor. The peasants, Berkeley said, might at least clean their houses, dress their potato gardens, and till their fields, however scanty. Their greatest crime, after all, was idleness. Irishmen were already the world's byword. 'The Negroes on the plantations had a proverb, that if Negro was not Negro, Irishman would be Negro.' But they were so proud of their filth, that one of his own kitchen maids had refused to carry out cinders, 'because she came of an old Irish stock.' A hut, a pot, a bundle of straw, a garden overgrown with nettles, and a heap of children tumbling on a dunghill—this was the picture of an Irish family in the richest county of Munster; and a cynical content in beggary among them, beyond what was to be seen in any people on earth. Granted that the woollen manufactures were taken unjustly from them, there was still room, and to spare, for productive labour. Ireland, for one thing, could grow hemp and flax enough to supply the British navy. She could manufacture paper. She, if she had the spirit for it, could thrive on the home consumption

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<sup>1</sup> *A Word to the Wise.* Address by the Bishop of Cloyne to the Roman Catholics of Ireland.

of her own produce. The plough and the spade would supply the place of foreign commerce, except in feeding vanity and luxury. It might be better for Ireland if all the fine folk of both sexes were shipped off to foreign countries, instead of spending their rents at home in foreign luxuries, and spreading moral contagion among the people. In the ancient English spirit, the Bishop of Cloyne called on the Government to re-affirm its old authority, restrain the licentiousness of the gentry, compel them to educate themselves, and educate the poor under their charge. When the industry of the country was once more in healthy activity, the incorrigibly idle, the sturdy and valiant mendicant, the rogue that preferred to live on other men's earnings by theft or beggary, might then be lawfully enslaved by the State, and set to labour whether he would or no. The public had a right over those who could and would not find employment; and temporary servitude was the best cure for idleness. Vagrants might be made slaves for a term of years. The sight of them, chained in pairs and compelled to work, would be a wholesome lesson to the rest of the community; and the rogue himself, who was thus earning, however unwillingly, his own food and clothes and lodging, so far from being degraded, was lifted on the first step of the ladder by which he could rise to manhood.<sup>1</sup>

So wrote the gentle Berkeley in days when liberty and human right retained their original meanings;

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<sup>1</sup> 'Several Queries proposed to the Consideration of the Public, | Cloyne.' *Works*, vol. iii. p. 149, &c. The *Querist* was first published by George Berkeley, Bishop of | in 1735.

when slavery was still conceived to consist in bondage to evil habits, and it was not yet understood that the first privilege of a free man was to do wrong, if he happened to prefer it to doing right.

But when a country is to be governed, there must first be found men to govern, and England could not govern Ireland, nor would she allow the Irish Protestants to govern it for her. And indeed, handled as they had been, they were fast unfitting themselves for the office. The Puritan spirit of the seventeenth century settlers was dying out. The industrial spirit which should have taken its place had been forbidden to grow. A moiety of the landowners were lounging in England or abroad. Of those who remained, a select few of the highest in the land had formed themselves into a society of Blasters, men whose religious service was a liturgy of execrations, and whose aim in life was to invent untried forms of impiety and profligacy. The choice spirits set the tone. Those less gifted, either in fortune or genius, imitated, at a distance, the more splendid vices of their leaders. The better sort, weary of the hopeless struggle, dropped off one by one, as the century waned, from the narrow road to the broad; till the English policy completed its work, and the ruling race so painfully planted, to hold and civilize Ireland into a Protestant country, degenerated into the politicians of 1782, and the heroes of the memoirs of Sir Jonah Barrington.

## SECTION II.

By the statute law of Ireland neither Papist nor Presbyterian was permitted to open or teach in any school or college in the four provinces. The <sup>1730</sup> Parliament had provided for the education of the Irish nation by an Act requiring the clergy to provide schools in each separate parish; and in this condition the Government had been content to leave the matter, satisfied with having prescribed an impossibility.

The Catholics, with the same steady courage and unremitting zeal with which they had maintained and multiplied the number of their priests, had established open schools in places like Killarney, where the law was a dead letter. In the more accessible counties, where open defiance was dangerous, they extemporized class teachers under ruined walls, or in the dry ditches by the roadside, where ragged urchins, in the midst of their poverty, learnt English and the elements of arithmetic, and even to read and construe Ovid and Virgil. With institutions which showed a vitality so singular and so spontaneous, repressive Acts of Parliament contended in vain. A Government which undertook to coerce a Catholic country with penal statutes was bound in justice and prudence to provide a better substitute for the system which it proscribed. After

waiting in vain for Popery to die of itself, intelligent Protestant gentlemen discovered, that if conversions were to make progress they must take some active measures with the education of the children, and provide schools which should offer greater temptations than those of their rivals. Wealth, power, superior enlightenment, all were in their favour. It was the boast of Protestantism that it was the religion of intelligence. The hold of the priests, Protestant writers were never weary of repeating, was on the ignorance and superstition of their flocks. Yet the priests were caring more for knowledge than they, beating them on their own ground, and fighting them with their own weapons, of which they were neglecting the use. Shamed and alarmed into exertion, the clergy and gentry took the matter into their own hands. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, and perhaps earlier, charity day schools had been scattered about by the exertions of individuals, where the children of the peasantry had been taught the catechism, and had received some kind of industrial training. In 1710 there were 30 of these schools, where 700 boys and girls, who would consent to be made Protestants, were being taught to read and write, to cultivate the ground, to grow hemp and flax, and spin, and knit, and sew. In 1719 an educational association had been formed: 130 of these day schools had been established, and the number of children receiving education was 3000. In 1730, in the viceroyalty of Lord Carteret, and in connexion with the general effort described in the last



section, to arrest the country in its downward progress, many peers, archbishops and bishops, the chancellor, the judges, and the justices of the peace, united in a joint representation of the necessity for larger exertion; and, without demanding the intervention of the State, professed themselves ready, if permitted, to establish a system of education which in time might become as extensive and as effectual as the admirable institutions which had been founded by the Reformers in Scotland.

The voluntary efforts hitherto had been confined chiefly, if not wholly, to Ulster. In the Southern provinces the colonies of Protestant peasants, which had been sown in so many parts by the Commonwealth leaders, had wasted away. Scanty handfuls only survived anywhere, when under the protection of some resident powerful family. There was but one means left to recover the lost ground, 'That a sufficient number of English Protestant schools should be established where the children of the Irish nation might be instructed in the English tongue and in the principles of true religion.' 'The clergy,' it was said, 'had done their best, but they were powerless to cope with so great a difficulty.' 'To the intent, therefore, that the youth of Ireland might be brought up in the true faith and loyalty in all succeeding generations, the Crown was requested to grant a charter for a corporation which might be empowered to hold lands and receive donations and bequests for the supporting of such schools as might be erected in the most necessary

places, where the children of the poor might be taught gratis.'<sup>1</sup>

Some subtle assault upon English interests, or the English purse, was usually assumed to lurk under Irish petitions. Too much education, if there were no other objection, might become an element of strength to the country, and to keep Ireland weak was the first principle of English policy. Walpole took three years to consider whether the gentlemen of Ireland should or should not be encouraged to educate the peasantry. At length, in 1733, he came to a conclusion that the experiment might be ventured on a <sup>1733</sup> small scale. He wrote to the Duke of Dorset, who had succeeded Carteret as Viceroy, for a list of the persons who were to form the corporation; and he fixed a margin within which their funds were to be limited. The Viceroy satisfied his anxieties. The trustees were the first men in the kingdom. The endowment, since the English Government required a limit, they were willing to restrict to 2000*l.* a year.<sup>2</sup> On these terms consent was graciously given. Estates were purchased, large donations were contributed, and, on the 24th of October, the long-celebrated Charter Schools, so fiercely condemned by the Catholic priests, whose worst enemies in fact they were, became part of the institutions of Ireland.

The schools were of two kinds—day schools, and

<sup>1</sup> 'Humble Petition of the Primate, the Chancellor, Archbishops, Noblemen, Bishops, Judges, Gentry, and Clergy of Ire-land, May 7, 1730.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Duke of Dorset to the Duke of Newcastle, June 14, 1733.'

schools where the children were separated from their parents, the trustees undertaking their complete maintenance. At both the general system was the same. The object was briefly described in 1738 by the Bishop of Elphin in a sermon before the Society. 'English Protestant working schools were established for English and national interests, from whence little colonies, instructed in religion and enured to labour from their tender years, might be sent out to cultivate the barren and neglected parts of the kingdom, and raise a spirit of industry and activity in the nation.'<sup>1</sup>

Book learning, on the model of the schools already existing, was made introductory and subsidiary to real work. The catechism was taught, and reading, and writing, and arithmetic were taught, but for two hours a day only out of the seven or eight of which the school day consisted. The motto of the corporation, 'Religione et labore,' implied a sound and wholesome conception of the meaning of the word religion. The arms were the plough, the spade, the spinning-wheel, and a Bible, opened at the text that the poor have the Gospel preached to them. The children were collected in the school-houses at seven in the summer and at eight in the winter. The business of the day opened with prayers. Lessons in grammar and writing followed, as has been said, for two hours. The rest of the time was given up to labour. Spaces of ground were attached to each school-house, extending to ten or more acres, which the boys were taught to cultivate.

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<sup>1</sup> *Charter Society's Tracts*, vol. i.

They trenched and drained. They ploughed and dug. They raised corn, potatoes, flax, hemp. They fed cattle on their meadows, and grew and stored hay for the winter food. The girls learnt spinning, reeling, sewing, washing, brewing, and the business of a dairy: 'all such work as might prepare them for being put out apprentices, or going into service.' Each boy and each girl was provided with a suit of clothes annually. The materials were raised, the linen and woollens were woven, and the clothes themselves were cut out and made up at the school-house.

The children remained at school for five years; at the end of which time they were bound out as apprentices to tradesmen, farmers, or artisans at the expense of the society. The cost at which these results were obtainable was not the least remarkable part of the system. It shows that there was a degree of practical intelligence in some heads, at least in Ireland, as good as could be found in the most favoured parts of Europe. To establish a school, to give clothing and instruction gratis, and to provide the apprenticing, was found, in most instances, temptation sufficient to induce Catholic parents to send their children to the day schools. In that case they were fed and lodged at home, and the annual cost for 20 boys, including all expenses, was but 35*l.* a year. The schoolmaster had a house and garden. His salary was 8*l.* in the country, and in town 10*l.* 'The 20 suits of clothes cost 17*l.*, and 4 of the 20 children were annually apprenticed to a trade for 10*l.*' The whole charge, therefore, for rescuing

each poor child from the utmost misery that could spring from poverty, ignorance, and wickedness, educating him for five years, and putting him in the way of being good and happy, was but 9*l*.<sup>1</sup>

At the charity schools proper, the schools in which complete possession was taken of the children, the expense was greater, and the number which the society could maintain was proportionately smaller. At the outset, from the smallness of the funds, one only was established in each of the four provinces. The first which was opened was founded by the Earl of Kildare, at Castledermot, for ten boys and ten girls, and formed a model to others, which increased gradually till, by the middle of the century, fifty schools were at work in different parts of the country. In all of them the education was of the same admirable kind as that which was provided in the day schools; with this difference only, that the society, when a child was once entrusted to it, took entire charge of such child's welfare, material and moral. Boys and girls alike were fed, lodged, educated, apprenticed; at the end of their apprenticeships, they were settled in life with a marriage portion. Where so much was done for them, care was taken that the cost and labour should not be thrown away. Admission into a charity school was, to a poor man's son or daughter, equivalent to ensuring their fortunes. In return, to avoid the danger of their relapsing into Popery, they were

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<sup>1</sup> 'Report on Schools in Ireland.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

usually removed to schools remote from their friends and relations.

The priests were furious. The temporal advantages offered were so considerable, that the strongest admonitions failed to keep the children away. The refusal of the sacraments was even tried with imperfect effect. The education itself was probably the very best which has ever been devised in modern times, eclipsing in its conception the Scotch system, which it was intended to emulate. For the first and last time the Irish gentry were really and thoroughly discharging their duties to the people committed to them; and, wherever the Charter Schools were fairly tried, they carried all before them. Pity only that for so large a harvest there were but few reapers, and that the work that could be done was limited by restrictions of finance. As Ireland then was, and in the existing humour of its inhabitants, a tax of 25 per cent. on the rents of absentee proprietors applied to multiplying schools, would have ended the Irish difficulty. Nay, the sums charged annually on the Irish hereditary revenue for royal mistresses, royal bastards, and court favourites generally scandalous, would have more than sufficed for the same purpose. Although the hereditary revenue did not cover much more than half the ordinary expenditure, and was, therefore, supplemented always by an additional vote, the King regarded it as his private property, with the appropriation of which Parliament had nothing to do. Out of this revenue 2000*l.* a year was now granted annually to the Presbyterian clergy,

and it was accounted a mighty matter. In addition to the 2000*l.* a year, secured by private endowments to the Charter Schools, the King was pleased, from the same source, to grant an additional 1000*l.* The munificence ceases to be striking when compared with the objects which were the usual occasions of the bounty of the Hanover princes. In the latter half of the century Irish pensions were used for Parliamentary corruption. The unhappy country was then made to supply, out of its taxes, the material for its own demoralization. Under the first and second George, such grants, if less politically mischievous, were more disgraceful to the administrations who consented to enter them in the public accounts. In 1723 the charge for pensions on the Irish Establishment was no more than 30,000*l.* In 1733, the year in which the charter was granted, it had risen in a total annual expenditure of half a million to 69,000*l.*

Among the distinguished persons in whose favour this annual burden upon the Irish establishment had been more than doubled, are to be found the Duchess of Kendal, Duchess of Munster in the Irish peerage, with a pension of 3000*l.* a year; Sophia Kielmansecke, another mistress of George the Second, created Countess of Leinster, with 2000*l.* a year; Lady Walsingham, daughter of the King and the Duchess of Kendal, with 1500*l.* Besides these, Lady Stanhope had 2600*l.* a year, Lady Darlington 2000*l.*, and old Baron Bernstorff, who, whatever his claims may have been on George the Second, had certainly none on Ireland.

received 2500*l.* a year;—almost a sixth of the Irish revenue thus scandalously squandered, and an annual thousand pounds all that could be spared to a fund which was a very fountain of the waters of life! So it was; and, still more strangely, complaints from Ireland on the abuse of the Pension fund were received in London with exclamations of indignant astonishment. Among the remarkable qualities of English statesmen during the last two centuries, the most striking, perhaps, has been their inability to recognize a political iniquity till it has become so flagrant as to be intolerable, and an inability equally great, when the iniquity has been redressed, to understand how it could ever have been tolerated.

The Irish gentlemen, meanwhile, were not deterred by the coldness of the English Government. The hereditary revenue continued to be squandered. The Dublin Parliament created funds out of fresh taxation, and raised their own grants to the society to four, five, and six thousand a year. Peers and gentlemen established schools on their own estates, which were affiliated to the central corporation. Archbishop Boulter came forward in practical liberality, and built and endowed a school in Dublin almost at his own expense. More than 30,000*l.* was collected in England by private subscription. Other sums were sent from the American colonies. The bishops of the Church began, in a few years, to congratulate themselves that the talisman which was to dissolve the spell of Papal



dominion had been at last discovered.<sup>1</sup> So vigorous, so effective, had become the society by the middle of the century, that Parliament appropriated a special branch of the revenue, the annual proceeds of hawkers' and pedlars' licences, to the support of the schools, and grafted on them an effective statute for the repression of Irish beggary.

'In every part of the kingdom,' said the eleventh of the 23rd of George II., 'mendicant children were seen wandering about the country; the Charter Schools had furnished means of educating and providing for them, so that they might become useful members of society.' The ministers and churchwardens had already powers to bind such children as apprentices, with the parents' consent; but this remedy had proved inefficient, and the numbers had still increased. It was enacted, therefore, that, after Michaelmas, 1750, the Charter Society might appoint officers in every province, with powers to take up children between the ages of five and twelve years who might be found begging, and convey them to the nearest Charter School, there to be taken charge of, bred up in industry, and bound out, when at sufficient age, as servants or apprentices to Protestants: and whereas children taken into the schools with their fathers' and mothers' consent had been afterwards demanded back on various pretences, for the defeat of the purposes

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<sup>1</sup> See the three volumes of the Charter Society's tracts, with the annual reports and the sermons of the bishops at the annual meetings. | See also a series of 'Letters from Henry Maule, Bishop of Dromore, 1741-1744.' MSS. Record Office.

for which the schools had been erected, the Parliament decided also that a child once received into a charter school was thenceforward a child of the public; and that, unless the parents could prove that it had been admitted against their will, it was not to be given back to them.<sup>1</sup>

How the very best system of education ever set on foot in Ireland, came at last to nothing, will be told in its place. The fierce and bitter opposition of the priests would have itself been inoperative. Irregularities in the management created occasional scandals; but these were promptly punished. Schoolmasters who allowed girls, under their charge, to be seduced, were three times publicly whipped in the nearest county town.<sup>2</sup> The Charter Society failed partly from the disorganized condition of general Irish society, which spoilt the healthy working of the apprentice system, partly from the spirit of the age, with which, as the century waned, it found itself in too harsh hostility. The catechism and industrial training were too unspiritual to suit the sentiment of revived emotional Christianity; and when the schools, instead of turning out hardworking labourers and artisans, were turned to purposes of soul-saving and propagandist enthusiasm, they came in conflict with modern liberal ideas, and were held to violate the sacred rights of conscience to choose its own religion, and, in its own wisdom, to believe whatever theories about divine things it happens to prefer.

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23 George II. cap. xi. *Irish Statutes.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## SECTION III.

THE Duchess of Kendal was not contented with her pensions, and her name is connected with another Irish scandal which obtained an unenviable notoriety. The rapacity of this lady was on the scale of her person. Wherever the curtain can be lifted which screened the secrets of the Court and Cabinet of the first Georges, the hand of Erengard Schulenberg can be generally detected, raking together ill-gotten plunder. It was alleged with truth—for when the storm was over a real deficiency was left to be supplied—that Ireland required an addition to her copper coinage. The Duchess of Kendal, in return for a share of the anticipated spoil, procured a patent for a rich ironmaster named Wood, to coin and circulate in that country 108,000*l.* worth of halfpennies and farthings. The metal, by the terms of his patent, was to be identical in purity with the metal coined for England. The weight of the coins was to be something less. The market price of copper in England was thirteen pence the pound avoirdupois: wrought into bars and prepared for the mint, it was reckoned to be worth eighteen pence the pound. The pound was coined into twenty-three pence, and allowing two-pence for waste and for the cost of cutting and stamping, the gain to the mint on each pound of copper coined in England was threepence. By Mr. Wood's

patent the pound of copper was confessedly to be made into sixty halfpence or thirty pence, and the gain on his grant, when carried out, if the letter of it had been strictly adhered to, that remained to be divided between himself and his patroness, would have amounted to something like 40,000*l.* The copper coin already in use in Ireland was inferior in sterling value to that which was now to be introduced. But the quantity was to be considered as well as the quality. The entire specie currency of Ireland, gold, silver, and copper, in 1724, was estimated only at 400,000*l.* In England the copper coinage in circulation was but a hundredth part of the whole. In Ireland, when the patent was executed, it would become a fifth of the whole. Copper would enter necessarily into all payments. It would displace and drive out gradually the gold and silver, it would confuse prices, offer an irresistible temptation to coiners, and create all the evils which invariably accrue when an inferior coin, intended only for small purchases, becomes the ordinary standard of exchange.<sup>1</sup>

The patent was granted in March 1723. The stream of halfpence commenced at once to flow; yet, though to some extent confessedly needed, they were received with dislike and suspicion, and the Duke of Grafton came over as Viceroy in August, furnished by Walpole with arguments which, as he hoped, would remove the objections.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Archbishop Boulter to the Duke of Newcastle, January 19, 1725.' *MSS.* Record Office.

The Duke found Dublin in an unpropitious humour. The city was fermenting under a pamphlet recently issued, entitled *Ireland's Consternation*. Every person was open-mouthed about the new halfpence, and the very servants of the Crown were afraid to defend what was so universally and indignantly execrated. Parliament met immediately after. Hawkers were screaming the pamphlet about the streets, as the Viceroy went from the Castle to the opening. His instructions being unsuited to the condition of feeling, he evaded the subject in the speech from the throne; but the first act of the Commons was to appoint a committee to go into it, and, after 'three weeks' reasoning and enquiry,' the Duke declared himself unable to find a single member who would support the Government. Alan Brodrick, the son of the Chancellor, hinted at an impeachment of Walpole in England.<sup>1</sup> A series of resolutions were passed, condemning the patent, and an address to the Crown was drawn up, insisting that it had been obtained by notorious misrepresentations; that if the terms were complied with there would be a loss to Ireland of 150*l.* on every 100*l.* worth of copper issued; <sup>2</sup> and that to grant patents of coining to private individuals was 'highly injurious.' The terms them-

<sup>1</sup> 'Brodrick, aftersome very odd expressions in a debate, said yesterday that nobody was too great in another kingdom for what he had done in prejudice to this; for a first minister in England had been impeached for grievances complained of by this nation.'—

'Grafton to Walpole, September 14, 1723.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'The value of the copper coined into sixty halfpence cannot be reckoned above a shilling; thus the kingdom will lose eighteenpence in every half-crown.'—'Objection to the Coinage.' *Ibid.*

selves, however, it was said, were not observed, bad as they were. Chemists appointed to analyze specimen pieces reported that the metal used was below the standard which the patent required. The corporation of Dublin sent in a petition that Wood should be required to exchange his halfpence on demand for gold and silver at the market price of copper. Lord Middleton wrote privately to Walpole, that in the humour of Ireland the project could not be carried out, and that the readiest way out of the difficulty would be to grant the corporation's request; <sup>1</sup> while the Duke reported that young Brodrick had sworn to expose the mystery before the Parliament of England, 'and did not doubt but that he should there discover other guise persons than this villanous projector Wood, who had been obscure but for this infamy.' <sup>2</sup>

The first emotion of the two men who at this time governed England was of passionate surprise. Lord Townshend <sup>3</sup> wrote a letter to the Duke of Grafton so violent that Walpole threw it in the fire, and composed another, making the question a personal one between himself and the Viceroy. Conscious of a bad cause, and exasperated at an opposition which he knew not in what way honourably to meet, he flung himself on the first object on which he could safely vent his indignation.

'I will not enter into the merits of the question,'

<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Middleton to Walpole, September 15.' *MSS. Record Office.* | tember 24.' *Ibid.*  
<sup>2</sup> 'Grafton to Walpole, Sep- | <sup>3</sup> Charles, second Viscount Townshend, President of the Council.

he said; 'I write merely as a friend. Parliament, under your administration, is attacking a patent already passed *in favour of whom and for whose sake you know very well*. Will it be for the service to suffer an indignity in this vein? The patent was passed by those that you have hitherto looked upon as pretty nearly engaged with you in your public capacity. Are they no longer worth your care or trouble? It was passed under the particular care and direction of one upon whom the first reflection must fall, that never yet was indifferent when you were concerned. That consideration, I dare say you will be told, is not worth the hazarding the quiet of the session; for all attempts of this kind have always secret springs and supports; as this, I believe, has from both sides of the water. Do you think the principal actors on that side aim at your friends here only, and have no eye to the Lord Lieutenant? or do you think those on this side, who chiefly point at your humble servant, are incapable in a proper place to turn it upon you, and impute the whole either to your want of credit and capacity, or to indifference, when you think yourself not immediately concerned? And do you think it impossible that such representations should have any effect in a certain place? In short, does your Grace think you will be thought to make a glorious campaign if, by compounding for this, you should be able to carry all the other businesses through without difficulty?

'The objections to the patent now come over, I venture to pronounce, are frivolous, and such as a very

common understanding with a willing mind may easily refute. I never knew more care taken than in passing this patent. I am still satisfied it is very well to be supported. What remedy the wisdom of Ireland will find out for this supposed grievance I am at a loss to guess, and upon whom the consequence of this Irish storm will fall most heavily, I will not say. I shall have my share, but, if I am not mistaken, there are others that will not escape. I hope your Grace is not mistaken when you are persuaded thus to be indifferent. There are some people that think they are ever to fatten on the expense of other men's labours and character, and be themselves the most righteous fine gentlemen. It is a species of mankind I own I detest. But I'll say no more ; and if your Grace thinks I have said too much I am sorry for it ; but mark the end. I am, &c.

‘ R. WALPOLE.’<sup>1</sup>

This singular letter must have crossed on its road the despatch, which informed Walpole of the threatened impeachment and the violent proceedings of the Irish Parliament. The news was not calculated to improve the humour of the imperious minister. He was specially irritated at the Duke's taking credit to himself for having prevented the Irish Houses from passing a direct censure on the advisers of the Crown.

‘ What is all this ? ’ He wrote again on the 3rd of

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<sup>1</sup> ‘ Walpole to the Duke of Grafton, September 24, 1723.’  
MSS. Record Office.



October: 'I know what these things mean in an English Parliament. I suppose you talk another language in Ireland. I have weathered great storms before now, and I hope I shall not be lost now in an Irish hurricane. If I am capable of thinking at all right upon this subject, I would willingly consider what is now to be done. You seem to think we must give in. Where then is Mr. Brodrick's crime if we, by withdrawing the grant, acknowledge that we were wrong? Consider what answer we are to make, and pray, don't do in this as you have done in every other step, stay till all is over and then speak.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord Townshend followed ten days later in the same strain; and from the letter which he was allowed to send may be inferred the character of that which Walpole burnt.

'The Irish,' Townshend said, 'are so absurdly wrong that I can only laugh at them. Can any one in his right judgment think the King will part with his unquestionable prerogative for such weak objections? It is so tender a point, that it is the highest folly in any one to attack it, unless there is manifest evidence of misapplication. Nor is the prerogative all. The King is touched more nearly, and feels his honour highly concerned in the affair.'<sup>2</sup>

The honour of kings, it seemed, was composed of material unlike that of common men. Unsoiled by the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Walpole to the Duke of Grafton, October 3.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord Townshend to the Duke of Grafton October 14, 1723. *Ibid.*

doing of wrong things, it was only tarnished by the exposure of them. Grafton had an ordinary conscience. He saw that the patent was iniquitous. He disliked being made the instrument by which it was forced down the Irish throats, and he resented the reproaches which had been flung on himself.

‘’Twas impossible to stop the torrent,’ he replied calmly to Walpole. ‘You ask what is to be done? Let the grant be declared void, as having been obtained on a misrepresentation. Do not irritate a country where there is such a visible coolness of affection, and so much ill blood stirring as may prove very hurtful to his majesty’s interest. I must not conceal from you, that the article of pensions has a great share in keeping on foot these murmurings.’<sup>1</sup>

Unable to resolve what to do, perhaps secretly endeavouring to compromise the matter with Wood, or induce the Duchess to forego her expected plunder, Walpole wrote no more letters. The Irish Parliament had forwarded their petition. Weeks passed, and it remained unanswered. They supposed that the English Minister was waiting for the Money Bill, and, when it was passed, meant to close the session. There was a call of the House of Commons. Members came up from the farthest parts of Ireland. All other business was suspended. Lords and Commons passed a vote, that they would sit till some answer came, and that no power should adjourn them but their own

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Grafton to Walpole, October 19.’ *MSS.* Record Office.

consent.<sup>1</sup> They intimated plainly that the supplies should not be voted till the patent was withdrawn.

Finding the Parliament thus obstinate, and not being on the spot to apply his usual methods of dissolving hostile Parliamentary majorities, Walpole had recourse to cunning. The money was indispensable to him, and at the same time he, or those whom he dared not offend, were resolute not to give way. The King, after three months' delay, wrote to express his regret that the patent had given offence, to promise an enquiry, and to promise also, that if Wood had been found to have broken his engagements, he should be severely punished.

The words were vague, but thrown, as they were, into the form of an apology, the Irish leaders persuaded themselves that they amounted to a confession of defeat; that their expostulation had taken effect; and that they could now afford to be generous. The two Houses replied, that they were grateful for his majesty's kindness; they trusted that means would be taken immediately to prevent the coin from being put in circulation; and, as a proof of confidence, they voted the supplies for the usual two years. They assumed that the dispute was at an end; and with an understanding that it was not to meet again for business till the autumn of 1725, and with mutual compliments and expressions of good will, the Parliament broke up, and the Duke of Grafton sailed for England.

Rid of his immediate difficulty, and choosing to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Grafton to Walpole, November 2.' MSS. Record Office.

believe that the opposition had been a mere explosion of unmeaning Parliamentary faction, Walpole now imagined that the course was clear before him, and that he could do as he pleased. The King's promise was observed to the letter. A committee of the Privy Council was appointed to examine a matter which was already determined on. A few bags of the halfpence were made over to Sir Isaac Newton to be analyzed; and when it was found that, so far as these specimens were concerned, the terms of the patent had been observed, Sir Isaac's name was paraded to shield a transaction which, whether they were observed or not, was still an abominable fraud. The Committee reported that the new coin was purer than that already in circulation; that there had been no misrepresentation; that Ireland needed an addition to its copper currency; that the King was acting within his undoubted prerogative; that the patent was granted, and that it could not be legally recalled.<sup>1</sup>

The report was sent to Dublin, with the results of Sir Isaac Newton's investigation. A hope was expressed that the Irish would perceive that they had been unnecessarily alarmed. The issue of halfpence recommenced; and Wood, in an evil hour for himself, was heard to swear that he would force the Irish people to swallow them, whether they liked it or not.

It was now that the champion of Irish rights appeared on the scene, whose genius has condemned a transaction to an infamous immortality which, but

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<sup>1</sup> 'Report of the Privy Council, July 24, 1724.' *MSS.* Record Office.

for him, might have been forgotten among the thousand scandals of those evil days. Since the prosecution of the printers of his *Address to the People of Ireland*, Swift had published nothing which could bring him into collision with the Government; not, however, out of any love for Walpole or the Whigs. The Whig policy was hateful to him. Against Walpole he had an unrequited grudge. He had been watching, doubtless, for an opportunity to quit scores with him, and the time was come. Perfectly well acquainted with the secrets of the English Court, and possessed in consequence with a scorn which gave him threefold strength, the Dean of St. Patrick's stepped down into the arena, in the disguise of a Dublin draper or haberdasher. He laid bare, in a series of letters, the scheme of which Ireland was being made the victim, and covered all the actors in it with a cataract of infamy which no ablution could cleanse. Dealing with unscrupulous men, he was himself far from careful of the exact truth. He wrote like a man in the hands of swindlers, and not particular by what name he called them. In a good cause there was no need to stand on trifles. He could not, of course, directly attack the Government. The miserable Wood was made the scapegoat, and Walpole was struck at through his side. He advised his countrymen, at all hazards, and at all inconvenience to themselves, not to admit the halfpence among them. He represented Wood, who was a wealthy Wolverhampton iron-founder, as a 'vile fellow,' 'a base mechanic,' a

speculating wretch, 'who had bought up the old copper in Ireland to make an artificial scarcity.' Wood had undertaken, as a compromise, to limit his first issue to less than half the original quantity: the rest he had promised to keep back till it should be wanted. What security could Ireland find, enquired the Drapier, so long as Wood was to be his own judge of her necessities? 'Let Wood and his crew of founders and tinkers,' he said, 'coin on till there is not an old kettle left in the kingdom; coin old leather, tobacco pipes, clay, street dirt, and call it what he will, we will not take it. By his own computation we are to pay three shillings for what is worth but one. . . . A whole kingdom is in dismay at the threats of one single diminutive, insignificant mechanic. We are to be eaten alive by this little arbitrary mock monarch; devoured alive by a rat. If Mr. Hampden chose rather to go to prison than pay a few shillings to Charles the First, I will rather choose to be hanged than have all my substance taxed at the arbitrary will and pleasure of the venerable Mr. Wood.'

Three letters of the terrible Drapier, all in the same strain, appeared in rapid succession. Already indignant at the trick which had been played <sup>1724</sup> upon the Parliament, the people were like fuel ready dried for the fire. The author was recognized notwithstanding the disguise of the name, and Swift became the idol of the Dublin populace. Mobs walked in procession through the streets, carrying Wood's effigy, a rope to hang him, and a coffin, and a winding-sheet.

The Government, alternately bewildered and furious, knew not which way to turn. 'What would you have?' wrote the Duke of Newcastle to Lord Middleton; 'the patentee has a right of property in his patent, of which nothing but force can deprive him. The King cannot revoke it. The patentee has complied with his terms, and the copper money is the best that ever was coined for Ireland.'<sup>1</sup> Unreasonable Ireland, that refused to be pacified with smooth words! The situation was one of a kind to which the Duke of Grafton was evidently unequal: a stronger hand and a stronger head were required to cope with it. Lord Carteret, then about thirty-seven years old, one of the ablest, if not the very ablest, statesman that Walpole had at his command, was selected, in Grafton's place, to dissolve the Opposition, and to use all means which experience in England had proved successful in such cases: corruption and resolution, adroitness and good dinners, 'Burgundy,' 'closeting,' and 'palaver.'

Carteret went to his work with commendable misgivings. 'I will do my best,' he said; 'I have had difficult things to do before. The pitcher goes often to the well, and is broken at last; but the proverb frightens me not. If I have the fate of the pitcher, people shall say, I deserved better luck.'<sup>2</sup> He landed on the 23rd of October, a day which was still observed

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Newcastle to the Lords Justices, October 3, 1724.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Carteret to the Duke of Newcastle, September 10, 1724.' *Ibid.*

with anniversary solemnities commemorative of the massacre. The Drapier was on the watch for his coming. At the moment of his arrival, the famous fourth letter, just newly issued, was being hawked through the streets. So far Swift had kept clear of politics. He might have been indicted for a libel upon Wood, but he had written nothing on which the State could found a prosecution. He had now deliberately touched a more dangerous chord. The sore point in the connexion between the two kingdoms had been the alleged dependence of Ireland upon England. Ireland with her own Parliament, and her own laws, had claimed to be a free country; under the same sovereign with England, it might be; but still free. If England, for her own purposes, chose to alter her succession; to expel one King and choose another; Ireland, unless with her own consent, held herself entitled to hold her old allegiance. She was vain of her supposed loyalty to Charles the First. She had rejected William and adhered to James, and had insisted that she was within her rights in doing so. By the 9th of the 1st of William and Mary, the English Parliament had replied by a statutory declaration that the kingdom of Ireland was annexed and united to the imperial Crown of England, and was subject to the English sovereign whoever he might be. The connecting link between them was not the person of the king or queen. The smaller country was attached to the larger as an inseparable appendage; and it was in virtue of this statute that the war of 1691 was regarded and treated



as rebellion. The resistance of Ireland to the half-pence had been described as unbecoming in a *dependent* kingdom. The Drapier, so choosing his words as to combine affected loyalty to the House of Hanover with loyalty to Irish liberty, and making it peculiarly difficult to construe his language into treason, yet gave voice to the inmost thoughts of Irish nationality, in denouncing the alleged dependence. 'Next under God,' he said in this fourth letter, 'I depend only on the King and on the laws of my country. I am so far from depending on the people of England, that, if ever they rebelled against their sovereign, I would take arms against them at my sovereign's command: and if such a rebellion should prove successful, so as to fix the Pretender on the throne of England, I would venture to transgress that statute so far as to lose every drop of my blood to hinder him from being King of Ireland.'

With these words, street and square were ringing when Carteret arrived in Dublin. Boys were standing at every corner, bawling out the last letter of the Drapier. The 'fly sheets' were being sold to eager buyers 'within the gates of Dublin Castle.' Without so much as an hour to collect himself after his voyage, the new Viceroy had at once to address himself to the battle. There was no time for dinners and Burgundy. 'To try,' as he said, 'the tempers of the leading people,' he summoned the late Lords Justices, the Privy Council, and the judges. He insisted on the lawfulness of the patent, the folly of the objections,

and the determination of the Government not to allow itself to be insulted. ‘The meaning of the movement,’ he said, ‘was now explained. It was not to escape the miserable halfpence. The Irish people intended to shake off their allegiance, and their dependence upon England. They would find themselves mistaken. He should immediately offer a reward for the discovery of the writer of the letter, and instruct the law officers to prosecute the printer.’

Many years had passed since words like these had been heard in Dublin Castle. Pity only that, when spoken, they were spoken on the wrong occasion. A violent debate followed. The Lords Justices, Middleton, and Speaker Conolly, supported the Viceroy. The Archbishop of Dublin,<sup>1</sup> Swift’s constant friend, and the Bishop of Elphin,<sup>2</sup> said coldly that such high-handed measures would fail of their object. A prosecution would add to the discontent, and endanger the peace of the realm. Under the existing circumstances no jury would find a bill.

Carteret fiercely replied, that ‘the peace of the kingdom should be kept.’ The Chief Baron<sup>3</sup> said that ‘things were in a bad way, if the board were to be intimidated, and the laws suspended, from a fear that sedition should be justified by a jury.’ After a stormy discussion of six hours, a majority were brought to consent that a reward of 300*l.* should be

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<sup>1</sup> King, now a very old man.

<sup>2</sup> Godwin, an Englishman, who had been Archdeacon of Oxford.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Hale, rewarded afterwards by a seat on the English bench.

offered for the detection of the Drapier. But the consent was unwillingly wrung from them. The entire Council agreed in condemning the halfpence. They required, and the Viceroy found himself unable to refuse, that the Proclamation should be directed solely against 'seditious and scandalous paragraphs' in the letter, and should contain nothing which could be construed into an approval of Wood. Even with these precautions, Archbishop King declared, on leaving the room, that 'the Viceroy would have reason to repent so precipitate a resolution.'<sup>1</sup>

Carteret was receiving an Irish welcome to his uneasy office. Like so many other statesmen before and after him, he had brought with him a conviction that Ireland required only a firm government; that authority had only to assert itself, in order to be obeyed. Had he remembered that a government must be just as well as firm, he would have brought the key to unlock the riddle with him; but with this remembrance he would scarcely have come to Ireland at all on his present errand. Unjust violence, alternating with affected repentance for past oppression, and childish prate about *Irish ideas*: this has been the eternal seesaw in the English administrations of the unlucky country. Who but Cromwell has ever tried to rule her by *true* ideas?

The Archbishop, with forty years' experience of public life in Dublin, understood the situation better than Carteret. Two days after he came privately to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Carteret to Newcastle, October 28.' MSS. Record Office.

the Castle, and, after talking in what the Viceroy called 'a very extraordinary manner,' told him that 'the Drapier had some thoughts of declaring himself, and might safely put himself on the country and stand his trial.' Carteret knew who the Drapier was as well as the Archbishop, and was aware that he had a dangerous person to deal with. But he had not yet dreamt of yielding. 'No one,' he said, 'however considerable, was of weight enough to stand a matter of such a nature. If the author desired the glory of a prosecution, he might apply to the Chief Justice of the King's Bench; the libel contained treason, and his duty was to bring the writer of it to justice.'

'You will tell the King,' Carteret wrote in sending information of what had passed to the Duke of Newcastle, 'that if the author's boldness should be so great as the Archbishop says, I am determined to summon him before the Council; and, though I should not be supported by them, to order him to be taken into custody, to refuse his bail, and keep him till I know his majesty's pleasure. The Chief Baron thinks that if we do act it must be with the utmost rigour. Lord Shannon tells me the chief citizens of Dublin are in a strange humour. Dr. Swift is said to be the author, but it will be hard to prove, though many think he may be spirited up to own it.'<sup>1</sup>

The haughtier Carteret's attitude the fuller became the cup of humiliation which in the end he was compelled to drink. All Dublin, from highest to lowest,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Carteret to Newcastle, October 31.' *MSS. Record Office.*

was openly defiant. The Proclamation was issued, but the criers dared not carry it into the streets. A declaration against the halfpence, signed by several of the Council, was printed on large sheets, and hung up framed in the most public parts of the town. A hackney coachman had an altercation with an officer about a fare. A mob collected; the coachman declared 'that the gentleman had offered to pay him in Wood's money,' and the officer was hustled and beaten. The Corporation presented Swift with the freedom of the city in a gold box. The story of the deliverance of Jonathan was made into a recitative and chanted about the streets :

'Then Saul said to Jonathan, What hast thou done? God do so, and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. And the people said to Saul, Shall Jonathan die who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid; as the Lord liveth there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan that he died not.'<sup>1</sup>

In England the Lord Lieutenant's vigour gave supreme satisfaction. The King said, that even 'if Swift came forward his acknowledgment would make no difference either in the crime, or in the manner in which it should be punished. The Lord Lieutenant should proceed according to law.'<sup>2</sup> The law itself,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Thomas Tickell to Secretary Delafaye, November 1.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Newcastle to Carteret, November 5.' *Ibid.*

justice itself, which the sentiment of Ireland was defending against English authority, proved too strong both for King and Viceroy. The Drapier having reconsidered his intention of declaring himself, the threatened prosecution was undertaken against the printer, a person named Harding. With characteristic audacity the Dean published an anonymous address to the grand jury, inviting them to throw out the bill. The worst that could be alleged against the Drapier, he said, had been but an unwary expression ; otherwise he had deserved well of Ireland, and ought to be supported ; the grand jury, being merchants and shopkeepers, had nothing to gain by returning the bill, and nothing to fear by rejecting it ; ‘ they expected no employment in the State to make up in their own advantage for the destruction of their country.’ This sarcastic stroke of insolence was received also with applauding clamour,<sup>1</sup> and the aspect of things was so

<sup>1</sup> Swift at one time undoubtedly contemplated, if not avowing the authorship of the letters, yet taking up the Drapier’s quarrel in his own name. At the height of the storm he addressed a letter to Lord Midleton from the deanery, which he evidently intended to publish. He assumed that the Chancellor agreed with him, and the Drapier having been silenced, he said that he must himself take up the pen. The English, he declared, knew no more of Ireland than of Mexico. They regarded it as a country subject to the King of England, full of bogs, inhabited by wild Irish

Papists, and kept in awe by mercenary troops. They thought it would be better for them if Ireland were sunk in the sea ; and if an Irishman came among them they crowded about him as if he were a wild beast. In reality, the Papists of Ireland were as inconsiderable as the women and children. Mr. Wood’s victims were Englishmen and Protestants.

He explained in detail, as he had done before, under the name of the Drapier, the nefarious character of the patent ; still, however, throwing the blame on Wood, and suggesting that the bellman of each

unfavourable, that even Carteret's own mind began to misgive him. Grafton perhaps had been less to blame after all than he and Walpole had imagined. 'The rage,' he admitted, 'was universal.' A general hope was expressed, he said, 'that his majesty would recede and withdraw the patent;' and he confessed that he hesitated what to advise. 'The Protestants having universally taken so unaccountable a turn, the Papists naturally followed suit to keep up the ferment. Commerce and credit suffered, and imaginary fears had become real evils. The troops were in good condition, and showed the best spirit, but they were weak in numbers.'<sup>1</sup>

English soldiers were spared the disgrace of forcing light halfpence upon Ireland to fill the pockets of a King's mistress. The prosecution of the printer was pressed. The grand jury took Swift's advice, and threw out the bill. They were sent back with a reprimand. They divided, twenty-seven to eleven in favour of persisting. The judges sent for them, man by man, to expostulate. They had but one answer, that the presentment of the paper would bring in the halfpence. 'Even treason,' Carteret said, 'would not be found by

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parish, as he went his midnight round, should cry, 'Past twelve o'clock. Beware of Wood's halfpence!' He himself, he said, if forbidden to speak, would go when he was in danger of bursting, and whisper among the reeds, 'Beware of Wood's halfpence!'

Midleton, as Chancellor, ob-

jected probably to the appearance of a letter of such a character addressed to himself. It was kept back at the time, but appeared afterwards as No. 6 in the Drapier Series.—*Swift's Works*, vol. vii.

<sup>1</sup> 'Carteret to Newcastle, November 14.' *MSS. Record Office.*

an Irish jury if coloured over with popular invectives.' La Touche, the banker, who had voted with the minority, was all but ruined by his temerity. 'There was so violent a run upon him, that it was feared he would be obliged to stop payment.'<sup>1</sup>

Amidst universal execrations, contrary to precedent, and contrary, it was alleged, to law, the first grand jury was discharged, and another summoned. Fourteen of the new jurymen were notorious Jacobites. Their humour was so confessed that the Chief Justice dared not press them to a decision. But being assembled, they refused to be passive. Instead of presenting the printer of the Drapier Letters, 'the grand jury of the county and city of Dublin presented all persons who had attempted, or should endeavour to impose, Wood's halfpence upon Ireland as enemies to his majesty's government and the welfare of the kingdom.'<sup>2</sup>

Two alternatives only now lay before the Government. Either they must suspend the constitution, declare Ireland in a state of siege, and govern by the army, or they must accept their defeat. Walpole, already fearing that he might have gone too far, had sent an order to Carteret, 'not to exceed the law, whatever the provocation.' He had bidden him 'consult such persons as retained their reason,' and let him know their opinions.<sup>3</sup> Carteret, with evident relief,

<sup>1</sup> 'Carteret to Newcastle, November 22 and November 24, 1724.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Carteret to Newcastle, De-

cember 1.' *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> 'Newcastle to Carteret, December 3.' *Ibid.*



replied that the matter must be ended; and that if the King could make up his mind to let the patent drop, a way of retreat would be opened to him. Men whose estates were in Ireland were shy of giving advice when public feeling was so violently agitated. Every one with whom he spoke, however, was of opinion, that something must be done before the Government could encounter the Parliament. So long as the patent was maintained, the public business could never be carried on. If the patent was cancelled, the House of Commons might be brought to vote some compensation to Wood, provided it was done indirectly, and his name did not appear.<sup>1</sup>

The dose was too nauseous to be swallowed without reluctance and wry faces. Townshend was especially indignant. 'The King,' he said, 'was astonished to receive such advice. He had asked for the opinions of reasonable persons, and he was answered that the patent must be withdrawn, and that money would then be silently voted to hush up the quarrel. The King never asked, or accepted, money from Parliament without specifying the purpose for which it was needed. He could not bring himself to make a private bargain. He had never meant to force the copper on his people: he would never allow it to be forced on them, and an assurance so distinctly given ought to be sufficient.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Carteret to Newcastle, December 16.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Townshend to Carteret, December 29.' *MSS. Record Office.*

Townshend's letter was read before the Irish Council. They were not satisfied. The country had made up its mind that the accursed thing should have no entrance there under any pretext whatsoever. Midleton resigned the seals, and the war seemed about to recommence; when Archbishop Boulter, then newly settled in the Primacy, interposed with judicious explanations, satisfied Walpole of the real danger of allowing the dispute to continue, and induced him to capitulate on the offered terms.

'All parties,' the Archbishop wrote, 'without distinction of party, country, or religion, are against the halfpence. Their agreement in this has had a very unhappy influence on the state of affairs here, bringing together Papists, Jacobites, and Whigs; so that 'tis questioned whether, if there were occasion, justices of the peace could be found that would with any strictness search and disarm Papists. The apprehension of the loss they will sustain in their estates if these halfpence are introduced has cooled the zeal of numbers that were before warmly affected. It appears also, and may more appear, that the uneasiness is a protection to any sedition, uttered or published, that has anything about the halfpence intermixed with it. No witnesses against such delinquents would be safe from popular fury. Papists and Jacobites have been very industrious in this affair to bad ends. Foolish people have taken advantage of it to talk of independency. Men of sense, however, abhor any such notion. They take the safety of their lives and properties to lie in the

connexion with England. I trust the folly of some and the wickedness of others will never provoke an English ministry to take angry steps to distress a nation where the title of every Protestant to his estate is inseparable from that of his majesty to the Crown. Their affection will revive when the present heat is over; nor can this nation be hurt sensibly without great damage to England. . . . But the uneasiness will remain till the patent is absolutely sunk. . . . I have asked them whether they would not admit ten thousand pounds worth or twenty thousand pounds worth of the copper. They say they will admit none. They are all determined, and you cannot venture to let Parliament sit till these heats are laid. I have told them that Wood must have been a great sufferer already, and must suffer more if his patent is revoked; that there is no doubt of its legality, or proof that he broke the terms of it. All here, however, are positive that his agents uttered a baser coin than those current at the Mint. He will not resign without compensation, and sedition may provoke his majesty to sustain him. We ought, therefore, to propose some amends to Mr. Wood to induce him to resign. Sensible people answer that they dare not propose anything for fear of being fallen upon in Parliament. But if the Ministry  
1725 will compute what they think it reasonable to allow Mr. Wood; and if, after he has resigned his patent, an order is sent from his majesty to pay some one in trust for Mr. Wood, without mentioning his name, such a sum for such a term of years as they shall

judge equivalent, they will be able to provide that payment in Parliament.'<sup>1</sup>

The Primate had expressed fully what Lord Carteret had been able only to hint at. After taking time to consider, the Government consented to terms, which, though unwelcome, were less severe than they might have expected. 'The method, your Grace proposes,' Newcastle replied to Boulter, 'seems reasonable, and may be a handle for something to be done when we come to a resolution.' Before the autumn session commenced the resolution had been arrived at, and the Viceroy was able to meet Parliament with an assurance that the patent had been cancelled. The private arrangement was carried out by which Mr. Wood was indemnified for his losses and for his mortification, and both Houses made gracious acknowledgments in the answer to the address. In the Commons there was no difference of opinion. With apparent heartiness they thanked the King for his great goodness and condescension. In the Upper House the Archbishops of Dublin and Tuam, Lord Middleton, and other Peers moved, and carried on a division, that to the words 'goodness and condescension' should be added 'great wisdom.' The sarcasm, a last arrow probably from the quiver of the Dean of St. Patrick's, would have turned the compliment into an insult. The Dean was held to have cleared his account with Walpole sufficiently without impertinence to the King.<sup>2</sup> Before the amended

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Primate to the Duke | (abridged).' *MSS.* Record Office.  
of Newcastle, January 19, 1725 | <sup>2</sup> Walpole had interposed in the

answer was presented the Primate again interposed. Archbishop King and Lord Middleton struggled hard for the 'great wisdom,' but calmer counsels prevailed. The words were lost on the second division by a majority of twenty-one to twelve, and the scandal of the Duchess of Kendal's halfpence was at an end.<sup>1</sup>

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English House of Commons to prevent Swift from being made a bishop, and had implied that he did not believe him to be a Christian.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Primate to the Duke of Newcastle, September 21 and 23.' MSS. Record Office.

## SECTION IV.

IN the midst of the heat and dust of the Wood hurricane, at a moment when the Duke of Grafton reported himself unable to stem a torrent which was swollen by the fusion of all the factions in Ireland; when the sacramental test could not be repealed, because the Catholics had so many friends in the House of Commons, and the dislike of Dissenters was stronger than the dread of Popery, the heads of a bill, if we are to believe the standard Irish historian, were introduced, carried, presented by the Speaker to the Lord Lieutenant in the name of the entire representative assembly, and by the Lord Lieutenant earnestly recommended to the Home Government, of so extraordinary a nature that, were the story true in the form in which it has come down to us, the attempt by an Englishman to understand the workings of Irish factions might well be abandoned as hopeless.

‘In the year 1723,’ says Plowden, ‘the heads of a bill were prepared for the strengthening the Protestants with all the invective acrimony (*sic*) which infuriated fanaticism could devise. One blushes for the humanity of an Irish House of Commons, which, in satiating its lust for persecution, adopted unanimously a clause for castrating every Catholic clergyman that should be found in the realm. The bill, thus surcharged with this Gothic barbarism, was presented on the 15th

of November to the Lord Lieutenant by the Commons at the Castle, and they most earnestly requested his Grace to *recommend the same in the most effectual manner to his majesty,*<sup>1</sup> humbly hoping from his majesty's goodness, and his Grace's zeal for his service and the Protestant interest, that the same might be obtained to pass into a law. It was transmitted to England, and for the honour of humanity there suppressed with becoming indignation.'<sup>2</sup>

A statement, so positively made, has passed into the region of acknowledged certainties. It has been beaten into the metal of the historical thoroughfare, and being unquestioned has been moralized over by repentant liberal politicians as illustrating the baneful fruits of Protestant ascendancy. The Catholics, unlike the Dissenters, had a legally recognized existence. Such of their clergy as were registered, and had abjured the Pretender, had as much right to officiate in their chapels as the Lord Lieutenant's chaplain in the chapel in Dublin Castle. The registered Priests were described by Swift as Whigs, and supporters of the Hanoverian Government; and even against those who properly fell within their provisions, the existing penal laws were rarely or never put in force. Yet it has been believed without difficulty, and without enquiry, that suddenly, and without special provocation of any kind, a House of Commons more than usually well inclined to the Catholics, turned

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<sup>1</sup> The italics are Plowden's.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical View of the State of Ireland*, vol. i. p. 221.

thus furiously upon all classes of their clergy, legal or illegal, and expected that England would reverse her policy and agree to a measure for the violent and immediate extinction of the Catholic religion in Ireland. It was observed in the *Commons' Journals*, that a bill of some kind on the subject was presented to the Viceroy, in the year which Plowden mentions, that it was sent to England, and that it was not returned. The traditionary account of its character was accepted as needing no investigation. The indignation of England was said to have been aroused, for it was the policy of the Irish Catholics to flatter England, as their defender against the domestic Protestant tyrants. Yet, if indignation was felt, it was unexpressed, for the Duke of Grafton was unaware of its existence. He did not even understand that the bill was rejected. He understood merely that it was postponed, and so little conscious was he that the heads contained anything unusual, that he enquired the reason why it had been laid aside, that he might explain what would be otherwise unintelligible.<sup>1</sup>

In widely credited historical fictions there is usually some chrysalis of fact which tradition has developed. In the present instance the imaginative part can be separated from the real with satisfactory completeness. Corresponding to the two classes of priests,

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<sup>1</sup> 'By the last accounts from England I find the Popery Bill is postponed, which the gentlemen of this country having had very much at heart, I should be glad to learn the reasons which induced you to lay it aside, that I may explain, for the juncture is critical.'—'Duke of Grafton to Lord Carteret, January 22, 1724.' *MSS. Record Office.*



the registered and the unregistered, there were, in the last century as in the present, two kinds of Irish Catholic policy. There were the quiet and moderate Catholics, who had had enough of rebellion and conspiracy; who wished only to live at peace on the remnant of their fortunes, and were contentedly loyal to a government which left them practically unmolested. There were the factions who fed continually on the recollection of their wrongs, 'and lived in constant hope of aid from the Catholic powers, to root out the Protestants, and shake off the yoke of Great Britain.'<sup>1</sup> Of this party, the regular clergy, the Jesuits, the priests, who were trained in Spain, France, and Flanders, were the head and soul. In close correspondence with the Continent, receiving their directions from Rome or Flanders, or the mock court of the Pretender, they were the persistent enemies of the English settlement, the recruiting sergeants who gathered the thousands of eager Irish youths that were enlisted annually for the Catholic armies, the impassioned feeders of the dreams which were nourished in the national heart for the recovery of Ireland for the Irish race, the return of the Stuarts, and the expulsion of the detested Saxon. These were the originators of all the political troubles which continued to distract Ireland. The registered priests were, for the most part, orderly and well-disposed.

In Kerry, where the cause needed thorough-going men, they were put out of their cures as too soft

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<sup>1</sup> 'Address of Convocation, 1713.' MSS. Record Office

and malleable, and their places taken by others of stronger national type,<sup>1</sup> who were the encouragers of the hougher and the ravisher, the smuggler and the Rapparee; whose business was to render futile the efforts of the English settlers to introduce order and enforce the law.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The unregistered priests were not universally of the disloyal sort. A curious picture of one of them is given by Mr. Dennis, of Kinsale, in a letter to Secretary Dawson. It was in 1714 when, in the alarm about the Pretender, special orders were sent to the magistrates to enforce the laws.

Mr. Dennis writes:—

‘Kinsale, June 11.

‘Sir,—Pursuant to the Lord Lieutenant’s Council order, I seized and committed a priest, one father Noe Mulshinoge, who never was registered. He is a very old, decrepit man, and for four years past had scarce been able to stir with the gout. He’s a drunken fellow, and was very serviceable to Protestants in King James’s time, and constantly kept with, and to his power supported, them. He has behaved himself very civilly here since the trouble, and banished one Bishop Lyne, and several other of their clergy, who came here to reclaim him, and had they stayed it would have been in vain. He always went by the name of King William’s priest, and, were it not for the sway that he bears over the Papists, I believe he’d be of another religion. I sent him twice

to Cork gaol, and the judges sent him back like a bad penny. He has tendered bail, who are very responsible Protestants, that he in his time heartily served, which I’ve refused to take. Let me know whether I may take security for him. If he must be sent to Cork I must get a horse thither, for he’s not able to go a mile.’—*MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> The activity of the unregistered priests in enlisting recruits for the Pretender appears in countless letters preserved in the Dublin Records. A series of depositions on the same subject are printed in the Journals of the Irish House of Commons for 1733. John Hennessey, late parish priest of Done-raile, said ‘that in August or September, 1729, he was in company with Connor Keefe, Popish Bishop of Limerick, Francis Lloyd, Bishop of Killaloe, and Doctor Stone, a Franciscan friar of Dublin, at the house of Teigue Macarty, Popish Bishop of Cork. On that occasion Keefe and Lloyd delivered a letter to Macarty, from Christopher Butler, titular Archbishop of Cashel, intimating the arrival of a letter from the Papal Nuncio at Brussels, to the effect, ‘that the

If English authority was to be maintained, it was fair and reasonable to distinguish between the registered and unregistered priests. To prohibit the teaching of rebellion and anarchy was not to interfere with religion; and if the chapels were to remain open, and if the laws intended to prevent the succession of the Catholic clergy were to be left in abeyance, the

Pope had complied with the requests of the bishops and archbishops of Ireland, and that his Holiness had sent him an indulgence for ten years to raise a sum of money to restore King James to his right.'

Hennessey desposed that he soon after obtained a copy of the bull.

'Every communicant,' in virtue of that document, 'duly confessing and receiving on the patron days of every parish and every Sunday from May to September, having repeated the Lord's Prayer five times, the Apostles' Creed once, and paying two pence each time, was to receive a plenary indulgence, with intent that God would speedily place King James on the throne of England.'

In the course of conversation Hennessey and his bishop had a dispute, 'as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of running goods and robbing King George of his duties.' The bishop 'held it no sin,' and permitted the priest to teach to that effect, saying, 'as King George had no right to the crown of these realms, he had no right to the duties.'

Hennessey was one of the priests

who wished to fraternize with Protestants, and was consequently obnoxious. The chapel congregation at Doneraile complained of him to the Bishop, as 'no better than a Protestant' himself. 'If Lucifer came out of hell,' they said, 'he could not carry more pride. His chief study when he can get any pence, which he seldom can, is to hasten to the Protestants of Doneraile, and drink it in brandy and punch. We pray you, without delay, recall from us that wicked unfortunate Protestant priest John Hennessey, for the gentry and community does not care to hear his mass; and Mr. Morgan, lately complaining to my Lord Doneraile of his wicked courses, his answer was to complain to his superior.'

A Catholic parishioner appealing to a Protestant nobleman against his priest, and being referred by him to the Catholic bishop, whom, according to law, it was that nobleman's business to prosecute and transport, is sufficient evidence of the laxity with which the penal statutes were practically enforced.

Government had a right to take care that indulgence was not made a cloak for treason. That the Catholic bishops who took their inspiration from Rome, preferred the sort who would make themselves most politically useful, was a reason for using a tighter rein with them.<sup>1</sup>

From the day the penal laws were passed, the Government had been in growing embarrassment. They had hoped that the terrors of the threatened penalties would prove sufficient; and even observers as keen-eyed as Swift expected, that when the existing generation of priests had died off, Popery would come to a natural end. Had the laws been enforced in Ireland as strictly as in England, the desired effect might have been produced. But the machinery of

<sup>1</sup> Warnings as to the character of these priests were continually reaching the Castle. In 1744, when the rebellion was known to be imminent, a certain W. D., who feared to give his name lest he should be murdered, wrote from Limerick to the Duke of Devonshire. 'There is one Peter Nayler, a parish priest and vicar-general of the diocese of Kilmacduagh, in county Galway, who, when he hears confessions, obliges his penitents to give him a certain sum of money in order to remit it to a foreign prince for his support, and tells them they are obliged in conscience to do it; and likewise he says, he can absolve them from any oaths of loyalty to the present King, and by this reason he may

withdraw the subjects from the King and cause a rebellion. In county Clare likewise, one Mr. Michel O'Brien, vicar-general of Kilfenore, does the same. One Pat Dogherty, parish priest near Ennis, does the same, and five others. They stir up their penitents, and give them such hearts that they are willing to do anything rather than disoblige their pastors; and, my lord, unless you prevent this business the whole kingdom is in danger. All these gentlemen, both priests and friars, now living in this kingdom of Ireland, ought to swear allegiance publicly to the King.'—'W. D. to the Duke of Devonshire, January 30, 1744.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

the constitution required the support of general opinion. In England popular sentiment was on the side of the law. In Ireland it was antagonistic. The police had no existence; and the Government, finding that they could not carry out the laws without violence, preferred, for the most part, to earn an idle popularity by affecting to hold them in suspense. On the eve of rebellion, as in 1714, they attempted fretful, irritating, and wholly ineffectual measures of temporary repression.<sup>1</sup> In the year preceding, when St. John and Harley desired to encourage the Jacobites, magistrates who made themselves officious were frowned upon. Nunneries and priories sprung up under the eyes of the officials, and interference of all kinds was steadily discountenanced.<sup>2</sup> Galway, one of the most important ports in Ireland, a place of so much consequence that exceptional laws had been passed to keep it in Protestant hands, was allowed nevertheless to become so exclusively Catholic, that there were no

<sup>1</sup> The magistrates at such times were utterly powerless. Mr. Crofton, of co. Leytrim, writes in 1714 to Secretary Budgell, that he had issued orders for arrests to be made.

'Yet I do not find,' he says, 'that any of the priests are taken. I know, indeed, it is very difficult—the much greater part of the country being Papists—to take any of the priests, or other ecclesiastical persons. The few Protestants in it are afraid of meddling with them, and I freely own it is my humble opinion, it will hardly ever be done

here by that method.' — *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>2</sup> 'In the close of the late reign great discouragement was given by the then men in power to such as were active in suppressing friaries, and putting the laws against Popery in execution. Great numbers of friars have within these very few years come into the kingdom, and settled themselves in this country.' — 'Representatives of the Grand Jury of Galway, 1715.' — *MSS.* Dublin.

longer sufficient Protestant freeholders in the town to form a jury. The corporation, though they took the oaths, and, on entering their offices, went through a pretence of conformity, were Papists to a man. Priests, friars, and bishops landed openly there, remained without concealment under the protection of the mayor, and dispersed about the country at their leisure.<sup>1</sup>

On the accession of the House of Hanover, the anticipation was of an immediate rebellion; and, had the Pretender prospered better in Scotland, it would have been doubtless realized. Ormond was expected at Waterford, at the head of the Irish brigade. Itinerant fanatics wandered about, denouncing the Reformation, calling Luther and Calvin emissaries of Satan, inviting the Irish to draw their swords for country and religion, and either conquer or earn a place in Paradise.<sup>2</sup> The Dublin mob kept the Pretender's birthday annually with the national ceremonies of a procession and a faction fight. Before the new dynasty was fixed in its seat, some real though short-lived exertions were actually made to crush disloyalty, and especially to stop the inflowing torrent of priests from the continental seminaries. There were a few arrests; there were a few, but not so many, transportations. Gradually the fever died away. The difficulties were constant. Magistrates would not risk unpopularity. Juries refused to convict. The peasants

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Statutes*, 4 George I. cap. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 'Depositions relating to a Riot in Ulster. MSS. Dublin Castle,

declined to give evidence. The necessity for severity, on the other hand, seemed to disappear. The Catholic Powers recognized George the First. England, the great protector of French and Flemish Protestants, felt obliged to show equal respect to the intercession of her Catholic allies in favour of Irish Papists. As her fears subsided, she discovered, in the Duke of Newcastle's language, 'that it was not for the public service, even of the Protestant interest, that anything should be done that might alarm the Roman Catholic Powers with whom the King was in alliance.'

Secure at home, in the common strength of the Protestant spirit in England, George the First's ministers could consider these questions at their leisure. In Ireland, where the Protestants were few and scattered, the recollections of the 23rd of October were still uneffaced. To them a landing of Ormond or the Pretender implied, or might imply, confiscation and massacre. On them would fall the personal effects of a rising, the elements of which they knew to be seething in their midst. Between the Protestant gentry and the loyal Catholic clergy there was a steady increase of good feeling. 'The laws,' wrote an ardent Protestant in 1717, 'are too severe already.'<sup>1</sup> An idea was finding general favour that every parish should be allowed a priest, regularly licensed by the Government; a plain oath of allegiance to which no conscientious objection could be made, being the only condition. Arrangements were contemplated for the continuance

<sup>1</sup> 'Anonymous Common Place Book, 1717.' MSS. Record Office.

of the succession, and salaries were spoken of for them to relieve the pressure on the people. The Regulars, meanwhile, whom the more intelligent Catholics themselves 'regarded as a nuisance,' might then be 'totally extirpated' and the laws be really and effectively executed to keep out the disaffected and disloyal seminarists.<sup>1</sup> In proportion to the disposition to reconciliation with one section of the Catholic clergy, there was a corresponding determination to clear the country if possible of the others, and to permit no bishops and vicars-general, who absolved subjects from their allegiance, and taught the people that the King had no right to his customs' duties. The true remedy, as they by this time knew, lay elsewhere than in penal laws—lay in an effective Church, enclosing in itself all Irish Protestants—lay in an education system co-extensive with the country, in a resident gentry conscious of their duties, and in the development of Irish industry. These things, however, required time. Of the best of them they were robbed by hard fortunes and English tyranny. Until the licensing system was fairly on foot they knew perfectly well that severe laws could seldom be enforced; but they thought that some deterring effect might be produced if the scarecrow were made a little more frightful.

The Duke of Bolton in opening Parliament in 1719 had urged very strongly the desirableness of more union among the Protestants in the pre-<sup>1719</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Letters to the King' by Charles Hogg, December 10, 1723. MSS. Record Office.



sence of the increasing strength of the Papists, and of their notorious inclination to the Pretender. The animosity of Churchmen against what they called dissent, forbidding an approach to the Presbyterians, the House of Commons determined to weaken their enemies by an addition to the penal laws against the more mischievous of the clergy. The number of prelates, friars, and unregistered priests was daily growing larger. Prosecutions, which in nine cases out of ten broke down for want of evidence, yet if they succeeded, were almost as useless. The transported priest either went back to his seminary, and another came over in his place, or he returned himself to a part of the country where he was unknown. The law was thus defied with the confidence of certain impunity. These foreign priests 'were the fomenters of all rebellions and disturbances.' 'Unless a more effectual remedy could be found to prevent their coming into the kingdom,' Ireland, it was felt, 'would never be quiet or well affected to the Crown.'<sup>1</sup> A committee of the House of Commons therefore drew the heads of a bill which they considered would keep such persons at a safe distance, and among other clauses it contained a proposal that every unregistered priest or friar found remaining in the kingdom after May 1, 1720, might be branded with a hot iron in the cheek, as a mark by which he could be immediately identified.

Before it was transmitted to England, the bill was

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Lords of the Irish Council to the Lords Justices of Great Britain, August 22, 1719.' *MSS. Record Office.*

reviewed by the Lord Lieutenant and the Privy Council. The Council, among whom was the Chancellor, Lord Midleton, and two Bishops, while most anxious for its success, considered that the penalty of branding was both too mild in itself and also that it would fail of its effect. The hot iron had been tried already for the Rapparees: 'the Rapparees had made it a common practice to brand innocent persons with the same mark, to destroy the distinction it was intended for.'<sup>1</sup> These five or six noble Lords, therefore, did certainly recommend as a substitute for the iron a penalty which was reported, rightly or wrongly, to have been used in Sweden with effect against the Jesuits. They did propose, not that all the Catholic clergy in Ireland, as Plowden says, but that unregistered priests and friars coming in from abroad should be liable to castration.<sup>2</sup> It was thought perhaps by those half-dozen gentlemen, that the horrors of such a punishment would keep the persons against whom it was threatened from landing on the Irish shores. An impression possibly prevailed, that a mutilation which would have disqualified a man from receiving priests' orders would subsequently invalidate them. Whatever the motive, the Council

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Bolton to Secretary Craggs, August 25, 1719.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> Not certainly as implying a charge of immorality. Amidst the multitude of accusations which I have seen brought against the Irish priests of the last century I have never, save in a single instance, encountered a charge of unchastity.

Rather the exceptional and signal purity of Irish Catholic women of the lower class, unparalleled probably in the civilized world, and not characteristic of the race which in the sixteenth century was no less distinguished for licentiousness, must be attributed wholly and entirely to the influence of the Catholic clergy.

did certainly, though with diffidence and hesitation, introduce this change into the proposed bill of the Parliament. The Duke of Bolton accompanied it with a letter, in which he confessed an expectation that it would not be accepted.<sup>1</sup> The Council themselves wrote, that 'they would gladly have found some other punishment which in their opinion would have remedied the evil.' They left the English Lords Justices either to replace the branding clause, or substitute some other penalty. They insisted only on 'the absolute necessity of making the law against unregistered priests and friars more severe than it was at present.'<sup>2</sup>

There was no occasion, as Irish writers have suggested, for the interposition of Cardinal Fleury. The Irish Secretary himself wrote that the clause was of no consequence if the substance of the bill was allowed to pass.<sup>3</sup> Lord Stanhope at once struck it out as 'ridiculous.' Shorn of the grotesque appendage, it went back to Ireland, where it passed the House of Commons, but it was thrown out by the Lords on other section, which was held to bear too hardly on the estates of Catholic landowners.<sup>4</sup> The story that

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Bolton to Secretary Craggs, August 25.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Lords of the Council to the Lords Justices, August 22, 1719.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.

<sup>3</sup> 'Mr. Webster to Secretary Delafaye, September 22.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Committee of the House of Lords have rejected the clause

in the Popery Bill relating to reversionary leases. Thus all the rest is involved in the same fate. The clause was thought unjust, as giving a subsequent determination of the meaning of a former law, which did not plainly appear by the letter of it, since the retrospect was to reach such reversionary leases as had been made on a supposition that the former law

both Houses of the Irish Parliament desired that every priest in Ireland should be brutally mutilated is thus reduced to more modest dimensions. The House of Commons drew the heads of an act by which a class of Catholic clergy, whom they were legitimately anxious to keep out of the country, should be treated like vagrants and deserters. The unfortunate ingenuity of a handful of Lords and Bishops made an alteration which was contemptuously flung aside; and the bill, after the work had been undone, was lost after all in the Irish Upper House, as unjustly severe.

It will be answered that Plowden's narrative refers not to the viceroyalty of the Duke of Bolton in 1719, but to that of the Duke of Grafton in 1723.

It is true that an attempt to revive the lost bill was made four years later, not with, but without, the sensational proposition; and it was made at the invitation of England herself, and for a special reason, in one of those bursts of alarm and anger which have periodically provoked English statesmen into acts of spasmodic severity. Bishop Atterbury, after seven years of restless efforts to bring about an invasion of Ireland by a Spanish force under the Duke of Ormond, had, in 1722, laid a plot to seize the Tower and the Bank, and to proclaim the Pretender in London. General Dillon, an Irish Catholic in the French service, was to land in England with some thousands of the

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had left them such a liberty. . . | October 31, 1719. *MSS.* Record  
 It is a great misfortune.' — ' The | Office.  
 Duke of Bolton to Secretary Craggs, |

Irish brigade. Ormond was, if possible, to carry out at the same moment his design on his own country. The plot was discovered. Irish priests were found as usual to have been the most active instruments in carrying on the correspondence. The English Government awoke to the necessity of cooling down these feverish spirits; and the Duke of Grafton, in opening the Irish Parliament in 1723, dwelt in his speech on the perils to religion and liberty which had been so nearly escaped; and he expressed a hope that duty, patriotism, and the just detestation of such wicked and unnatural contrivances would animate both Houses to give the world an evidence of their loyalty. The King's only object for Ireland, he said, was to make it a happy Protestant country. The Parliament, he trusted, would give its serious attention to provide laws for strengthening the Protestant interest, and prosecuting more effectually those already in being against the Catholic priests, whose numbers were notoriously increased.<sup>1</sup>

The responsibility of the initiation was thus assumed by Walpole's cabinet. The Irish Commons, so exhorted, passed a series of resolutions against the connivance of magistrates, false conversions, and pretended conformity, by which the penal laws were systematically evaded. They then took up again the lost bill of 1719. Lord Fitzwilliam and other gentlemen, whose properties were affected by it, and whose

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<sup>1</sup> 'Speech of the Lord Lieutenant, August 29, 1723.' *Commons Journals*.

interest had thrown it out, were heard in objection at the bar of the House. After long discussion the heads were agreed upon and were presented by the Speaker to the Viceroy, as Plowden says, with a special request that he would recommend them to the consideration of the Government. The Duke replied that he had so much at heart a matter which he had himself advised, that the Commons might depend on his respecting their wishes. The Council, warned by experience, attempted no second alterations. The nature of the penalties was left apparently for England to decide, for the Council this time insisted merely on the need of 'some effectual means' to stop the influx of priests; and requested Walpole, Townshend, and Stanhope to determine what those means should be.<sup>1</sup>

The 'Wood' hurricane was at this moment unfortunately at its height, and absorbed by its violence every other consideration. Embarrassed by the <sup>1724</sup> larger problem, the English Government had no leisure to consider the difficult question of dealing with the unregistered priests. The bill was laid aside, not rejected, but merely postponed, and before another session the alarm had subsided. But that there was no collision between the two countries, and no divergence of opinion; and that the Irish Catholics have no reason on this occasion to thank Walpole for

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<sup>1</sup> The words referring to the penalty are merely 'That some more effectual remedy to prevent these great evils is, in our opinion, absolutely necessary.'—'Sketch of Heads of Popery Bill, Council Chamber, Dublin, December, 1723.' *MSS. Record Office.*

standing between them and their Protestant oppressors, may be concluded with certainty from the Duke of Grafton's words at the prorogation. He insisted, as strongly as at the opening, on the need of a vigorous execution of the laws already existing, to the neglect of which the increase of priests was due. For himself he promised to contribute his part by giving directions that, for the future, such persons only should be put in the commission of the peace as had distinguished themselves by steady adherence to the Protestant interest.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, Feb. 12, 1724.

## SECTION V.

So ended the last attempt to punish, by penal laws, the unregistered Catholic clergy as such. 'Weariness of the struggle and the mildness of the <sup>1725</sup> Government determined that the conversion of the nation should be left to time, unless the priests should be mad enough to give fresh provocation.'<sup>1</sup> 'The Irish people,' it was thought (and the words are a remarkable tribute to the value of authority in Ireland, however imperfectly it was exerted), 'the Irish people were more docile and less obstinate than either the Scotch or Welsh, and, had the same pains been taken to convert them which were used in Wales and Scotland, Ireland would have long since become Protestant.'<sup>2</sup> The object of intelligent people thenceforward was to find a means of reconciling the loyal priests and the Government, and subsidizing a power which had proved too strong to be violently overthrown.<sup>3</sup>

Many bills, or attempted bills, directed at the curtailment of Catholic influence, bills to prevent intermarriages between Catholics and Protestants, bills to annul clandestine marriages accompanied with violence

<sup>1</sup> *Reflexions for the Gentlemen of Ireland.* Dublin, 1738.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 'Possibly it might be a good plan to abolish the payments of dues, offerings, and fees, from the poor Papists to the priests, and

settle salaries for them. Their interests would then be closely tied to those of the State, and they might be managed like cannons, whose mouths are still pointed as they please who fill their bellies.' Ibid.



and rape, bills to prevent the intrusion of false converts into public employments or seats in the House of Commons, bills to check the practising of Catholic solicitors, can be traced for another generation in the records of the Irish Parliament. But the real feeling of the Protestant gentry on this momentous subject was from the present period rapidly changing. A signal evidence of the alteration remains in a sermon preached before the House of Commons, which received the thanks of the House, and was printed by order, at the very time when, if tradition spoke truly, both Peers and Commons were endeavouring to force a measure upon the country which would have placed the Protestants of Ireland on a level of barbarity with Spanish inquisitors. The preacher was Doctor Synge, Chancellor of St. Patrick's, afterwards Bishop of Clonfert. The occasion was the 23rd of October, the anniversary of the Irish St. Bartholomew day. The year was 1725. The text was the 23rd of the 14th of St. Luke, 'Compel them to come in : ' the subject, the legitimacy of compulsion, as applied to conscience.

'Ireland and England,' the preacher said, 'are in that peculiar position that many of those who have enjoyed the protection of the Government are only watching their opportunity to overthrow it. The conspiracies against Queen Elizabeth, the Gunpowder Plot, the dreadful massacres of this day, are so many evidences of what is plain from history. For this reason the wisdom of the legislature has thought it necessary to frame several laws to weaken the power

and interest of the Catholics of Ireland, and because the laws do not answer the end proposed, others more severe may come hereafter to be tried.

‘Self-preservation is the first law of life, but laws of this kind are liable to one objection, which in the opinion of many persons is fatal; that the cause of division being a difference of religion, no laws can be formed on such a subject without invading the natural liberties of conscience. Since the design of the legislature in appointing the anniversary thanksgiving on this day is to perpetuate the memory of a barbarous and cruel conspiracy, and the dreadful effects on the Protestants of Ireland produced even by a partial execution of it, it will not be amiss to consider this objection, and enquire what influence it should be allowed to have.

‘The principles of the Church of Rome on this subject are confessed. That Church regards heresy as a crime which it has a right to punish with death. Some Protestants have held the same opinion. Hobbes has maintained that the civil power may define the national religion. Men may think what they please, but, in the expression of their thoughts, they must conform to the law. For myself I conclude that, if we consider men’s opinions and practices in religion with respect only to the Christian law, neither the governors of the Church, nor the civil magistrates, have a right to use force to restrain or punish them. Heresy may, or may not, be a crime in itself, but the civil magistrate may punish only those forms of crime

which are visibly injurious, such as theft, adultery, or murder; and all persons whose social principles have no tendency to hurt the public are entitled to toleration. Repression in such cases leads only to faction and sedition. The religion is not to blame, but the persecution employed against it; and the remedy is not to increase the severities, but entirely remove them. There are, however, some false principles in religion which the civil magistrate is compelled to notice. The general opinion is, that religions are not to be tolerated which seem destructive to society, and on this principle Irish legislation has proceeded. It is a position which I cannot accept, and for this reason. I distinguish between inward principles and outward actions. All are agreed that the plea of conscience will not cover crime. If conscience erring invincibly prompts a man to do a wicked action, it may perhaps excuse him in the sight of God; but as man cannot distinguish between the pretence and the reality, those who are guilty of treason must suffer as traitors. The question is, however, whether when men have adopted principles into their religion which formerly have influenced others, and may probably influence them again, to engage in designs destructive of the public good, the magistrates ought not to refuse to persons of that erroneous religion liberty to worship God according to their consciences.

‘In favour of toleration it is said broadly, that the refusal is unlawful, and does more harm than good. The magistrate has nothing to do with opinion. To

prevent men from meeting for religious purposes is practically impossible, and therefore the less it is tried the better. You have to consider whether a limited toleration under the civil magistrate is not on the whole a more likely means to prevent the evil consequences of bad principles than a total denial of it.

‘ The magistrate<sup>1</sup> is bound to provide for the public security: but he has remedies of another kind, which will be effectual to his end. He may make laws to limit the property of the professors of a false religion, to divide it into several hands, and to hinder them from making new acquisitions which in kind or degree may be dangerous. Though men’s religion be their own concern exclusively, their property, so long as they continue members of society, is and must be subject to the supreme powers. It may be taken from them either in whole or in part, and the right of acquiring more be abridged when public good requires. The richest merchandize may be destroyed when there is danger of infection. Houses may be demolished to check a conflagration. Agrarian and sumptuary laws limit men’s rights of enlarging their possessions. Yet laws of this kind were never accounted unjust. The magistrate too may provide means of instruction. He may establish schools under public inspection, and so provide for the natural disappearance of the evil in another generation. If these means fail, he has a further remedy, which though violent is, in cases of

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<sup>1</sup> This is particularly to be attended to, for it indicates the direction in which intelligent Irish opinion was running.

extremity, undoubtedly lawful. He may oblige such persons to leave the country, and remove out of a society which they will not allow to remain in peace. If it be objected that men will dissemble under such conditions, rather than leave their homes, the answer is that these means may be adopted only as a last resort when nothing else will serve.'

Having laid down these general principles, Doctor Synge concluded by applying them.

'The Catholics,' he said, 'do in fact hold doctrines pernicious and dangerous to the public peace. They maintain it to be not only lawful but right to extirpate heretics, and they must therefore inevitably and at all times be enemies to a Protestant government. They hold the detestable maxim, *Nulla fides servanda cum hereticis*. They insist that the Pope has power to excommunicate and depose heretical princes, and absolve subjects from their allegiance, and at this moment they regard another, and not his majesty, to be lawful king of England. Against persons holding these opinions we have a right to protect ourselves. The best remedy would be to convert them, not outwardly, which does more harm than good, but inwardly and really. We should see to the encouragement of true religion, and the education of children. Further, we must distinguish between Catholics who at heart adhere to these dangerous principles, and Catholics who, though continuing in that communion, are ready to disclaim and renounce them. All who will make these concessions, we are bound to tolerate. We shall

then hear no more of tyranny over consciences ; and those who afterwards incur the penalties of the law must, themselves being judges, be owned to suffer not as persons professing the Romish religion, but as persons who refuse to give the Government a fair and reasonable security for their being loyal and peaceable subjects.’<sup>1</sup>

The House of Commons, in thanking the Chancellor of St. Patrick’s for his sermon, accepted his principles as their own. The House of Lords, on the 3rd of the ensuing December, passed a resolution, ‘that the most probable way to restrain Popish priests and regulars from coming into the kingdom, would be to allow a competent number of secular priests to exercise their functions under such regulations as might be for the security of the civil state.’ Dr. Synge, referring to this vote of the Peers, in a reply to an attack made upon him by a Protestant fanatic, argued that if a sufficient supply of priests was permitted by the law, the temptation to encourage others would be removed ; such of them as were recognized would combine to keep out the rest : and the question for the Government to consider was, whether it was more prudent, more convenient, more for the interests of religion and the commonwealth, to have five hundred secular priests educated in countries and universities where the violent views of the Jesuits were not

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Sermon preached before the House of Commons at St. Andrew’s Church, Dublin, October 23, 1725. By Doctor Edward Synge ;’ *fr* which Dr. Synge received the thanks of the House. Published by order. Abridged.

received, making, on their admission, a complete renunciation of the extravagant claims of the Papacy, and taking the oaths of allegiance and abjuration; or to have two thousand, for the most part regulars, lurking in holes and corners, educated where the most extravagant doctrines were most in request, never renouncing them, and giving the State no security for their good behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

If the scheme thus sketched was never carried into effect, the fault was less in the Irish legislature than in the inherent difficulties of the subject. The establishment, for to this it must have amounted, of the Catholic Church in Ireland, would have probably involved the expatriation of the Irish Catholic episcopate. The five hundred priests would have been ordained abroad, and admitted only as they were wanted to supply vacancies. If those objections could have been overcome, the consent would still have been required of the English Parliament, and would probably have been asked for in vain. An end, however, which was not to be obtained directly, was procured less satisfactorily, by continued connivance. The hierarchy was left undisturbed, and an understanding gradually grew up, that the bishops should give practical assistance to a Government which was on the whole so lenient. The educated Irish Catholics began from this time to forget their disloyalty. Among the State papers preserved in Dublin is an examination of a bishop in the year 1745, whose name is disguised

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<sup>1</sup> Reply to Mr. Radcliff, by Dr. Syngé.

behind initials, and those probably incorrect. He was questioned as to an intention of insurrection. He was able to assure the Government that there was none. He had himself, in his diocese, discouraged 'externes,' as the foreign priests were called; he had kept the Jesuits at arm's length, and suppressed convents and friaries more effectively than the county magistrates could have done all combined. Conspiracy, he said, there could be none of which he could be left in ignorance. And, 'if he knew of any practices,' he promised to give notice to the authorities at the Castle.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Examination of N. S., 1745.' Dublin, MSS. The bishop, whoever he was, gives curious particulars as to the condition and organization of the Irish priesthood.

At that time there were twenty-four bishops and archbishops. The Pope appointed them, sometimes at the postulation of the priests of the diocese. N. S. had been a parish priest for twenty-six years before he was made a bishop. He had his orders in Spain; ordination in Ireland being, he said, unusual. The friars were governed by their own provincials, who, if necessary, could inflict corporal punishment on them. He himself, though a bishop, retained his parish, and had two curates to help him. They must have all been very poor, and made the burden of their maintenance as light as possible.

'In his parish,' he said, 'some gave him five shillings and five pence, some one shilling and a penny, some sixpence halfpenny. In some parishes the priests got only corn and bread, and other little things. Collections were made on Sundays. In his parish he got half the collections and the friars of a religious house the other. He had thirty-two priests under him. They gave him a guinea each at the distribution of the oils. His income from his parish was forty pounds a year, of which he gave a third to his coadjutors. The collections at his chapel door were about sixteen shillings a year. His parish was the best in the diocese. Common parishes were worth thirty or thirty-five pounds a-year—no more.'



## CHAPTER II.

### PROGRESS OF ANARCHY.

#### SECTION I.

**T**<sup>1725</sup>HERE are four systems under which a dependent people may be held together under the forms of a coherent society.

They may be governed wisely and firmly under a rule impartially just, by the laws, so far as intellect can discern them, appointed by the Maker of the world.

They may be governed, without justice, by superior force, which considers nothing but its own will.

They may be left to govern themselves according to such ideas as to the majority of them seem good, authority claiming nothing but political allegiance, and maintaining a police to repress the grosser form of crimes.

And, lastly, they may be 'managed' by adroit handling, the internal factions being played off one against the other; while the central authority prevents violent collisions, maintains a general equipoise, and dissolves dangerous combinations by 'corruption' and influence.

The first of these methods, which succeeds always and in all countries, is the most rarely tried, because it implies virtues which are rare at all times, and especially rare in men in power—self-denial, patience, wisdom, courage, the subordination of the rulers themselves to the rules which they impose on others. The English, under the high impulse of Puritanism, attempted it once in Ireland, but for the few years only, during which they endured for themselves the moral restraint of deep and noble convictions. When they ceased to govern themselves nobly, they were no longer able to govern Ireland nobly ; and after a short-lived experiment gave up the effort.

The second method, coercion without justice, became the rule in Ireland at the Revolution. This too, if carried out, might have been successful in keeping the Irish in subjection. Being a people incapable of self-restraint, the Celtic peoples are and always have been pre-eminently amenable to an authority which dares to assert itself. But coercion implied force ; force, or forces—a large and disciplined army ; and England, free herself, imagined that she could coerce Ireland under the forms of her own constitution, and refused to supply materials of despotism which might be dangerous to herself.

Coercion failed for want of strength. Self-government of a real kind, self-government, accompanied by the enfranchisement of the Catholics and Dissenters, it was dangerous to try. No one indeed as yet thought of trying it in a country where nine-tenths of the land

had been taken violently from the old proprietors, whose crime had been to challenge for Ireland her right to her own laws and her own creed.

There remained, therefore, the last expedient, the easiest and also the worst: the policy, if so base a system may be honoured by such a name, which had been tried already by the Plantagenet and Tudor sovereigns, and had produced a condition of society in which order and morality were words without meaning, and out of which, in the vision of the saint, human souls were seen descending into hell as thick as hail-showers. This method, set upon its feet once more, became again the rule, till misgovernment produced its inevitable fruits—agrarian conspiracies, mock patriotism, rebellion, and the still weltering chaos of discontent and disloyalty.

The attempt to prevent, by unexecuted threats, the continuance of the priesthood and the Catholic hierarchy having decisively failed, the next object of English statesmen was to disarm their hostility and detach them from the cause of the Pretender. The change of view was natural and not indefensible. Catholicism in Europe was losing its political character. New principles of combination, with new objects, were forming themselves between the leading powers, and a Catholic crusade against Protestantism was ceasing to be possible. The adherence of the Irish to the Papacy was no longer necessarily dangerous. England might be at war with France, and yet France, if care was taken to keep the priests in good humour,

need no longer as a matter of course find an ally in Irish disaffection. The same influences might be made available to neutralize domestic discontent. To promote the prosperity of Ireland was not a matter which presented itself as a duty to an English administration, whatever its political complexion otherwise. The poorer the country could be kept, the less likelihood there was of its being troublesome. The only anxiety was to preserve outward quiet, to secure the voting of the supplies, and to suppress Parliamentary mutinies which might threaten the commercial monopolies. The agitation which England had most to fear was among the Protestants, whose manufactures had been ruined, and whose energies there was a determination to repress. The Catholic population formed a counterpoise which it was convenient to keep in good humour, while to protect them from persecution was an easy compliment to Catholic allies on the Continent. In effect, therefore, under the first two Georges, English statesmen said to the Irish priesthood, 'We will defend you from the penal laws if you in turn will discountenance the agitation from Ormond and the Pretender. If you will be loyal to England, we will take care to shield you from Protestant ascendancy.' The simplest method would have been to modify the laws; and the Irish Parliament itself would have gladly consented to some arrangement by which the priesthood could have had a recognized existence. But no hint can be traced among the English State papers of any such desire. The state of English opinion might

perhaps have made an alteration of the penal statutes impossible; perhaps their continued maintenance was essential to the continuance of Catholic gratitude.

This ambiguous handling, however, though convenient to Walpole and Newcastle, was less satisfactory to the Protestants of Ireland. They had been planted as a garrison in a hostile country. They had been set to rule on principles which, unless acted upon with sufficient consistency to destroy the creed at which they were aimed, were an enduring and yet useless insult; and they saw the professors of that creed recovering strength and numbers, and re-acquiring wealth and consistency. They were in possession of the estates of the native proprietors, who had lost them in defence of their religion; and the toleration of that religion was a quasi-confession that the confiscation had been an unrighteous act. Their position was the more cruel because viceroy after viceroy, in the speeches from the throne, continued to urge Parliament to enforce the penal laws, while in private those same viceroys were obliged to forbid them to be enforced. Carteret, in 1725, reminded the Lords and Commons, that as all Protestants in Ireland had but one common interest, so they had often too fatally experienced that they had one common enemy. In 1727 Carteret again urged the execution of the law to prevent the coming in of priests from abroad. In 1726, in the interval between those two speeches, he was instructed by Newcastle, 'that nothing must be

done to alarm the Catholic powers with whom England was in alliance.’<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Dorset, in 1731, recommended the Legislature ‘to consider what further laws were needed to prevent the growth of Popery and secure them from danger from the number of Papists in the kingdom.’ Yet when the heads of a bill were sent over for a purpose, it was set aside as unusual; and at that very moment, and before and after, in defiance of repeated promises and two Irish Acts of Parliament, the English Government was daily receiving and granting petitions to the representatives of dispossessed families for a reversal of their attainders, which gave them a right to recover their lands. In 1740 as many as eighty suits were pending in the Irish Courts against Protestant landowners in the county of Cork alone, who had purchased their estates under the security of a Parliamentary title, and of an Act specially declaring that no attainders should be reversed without Parliament’s consent.<sup>2</sup> The purchasers were half-ruined in defending themselves even when they gained their suits. Families who had been in undisturbed possession for fifty or sixty years found themselves turned adrift and penniless. Indeed, as the Irish Bar was constructed, they had scarcely better hope of justice than under Tyrconnell himself; for the practice of the courts was almost exclusively in the hands of converts who were Protestants but in

<sup>1</sup> ‘Newcastle to Carteret, February 24, 1726.’ MSS. Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> *Commons’ Journals*, Ireland, Feb. 8, 1740.

name, of men who had been Catholics in London, took the sacrament once on their way to Dublin, and were admitted to plead on the strength of it, but were essentially Catholics always, and devoted their whole services to the party to which at heart they belonged.<sup>1</sup>

Since Romanism was to continue, it became necessary to define more sharply the terms on which it was to exist, and to take measures to secure the lives and fortunes of the colonists from being sacrificed to English compromises, or the Catholic birds of prey in the Four Courts. Catholics who consented to abjure the Pretender had been hitherto admitted to the franchise. The rate of increase in the Protestant population was in itself smaller than among the Catholics, from their more prudent habits, and was further checked by the emigration. The disproportion of numbers threatened to throw into Catholic hands the control of half the constituencies in the southern provinces, and the privilege of voting was taken from them.<sup>2</sup>

The Government, in pursuance of their views of conciliation, since they could not by law appoint Catholics to the commission of the peace, selected from among the Protestants those gentlemen who would be most agreeable to the Catholics: recent converts whose faith was from the lips outwards; men whose wives were Catholic, whose children were bred in the creed

<sup>1</sup> 'Archbishop Boulter to New-castle, March 7, 1728.' *MSS. Record Office.*

<sup>2</sup> 1 George II. cap. ix. *Irish Statutes.*

of their mothers. A committee of the House of Commons stated, that while this practice continued the peace of the country could not be preserved. Conciliation so followed gave the administration of the laws to ruffians whom the laws rather should have been a whip to scourge.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The difficulty of finding competent magistrates was one of the most pernicious results of absenteeism. Had the great landowners remained at their posts the Government would have had no excuse for passing them over, or putting power into the hands of such a person as is described in the following story:—In the year 1729 Mr. Hubert Burke, a professing Protestant, was a magistrate at Loughrea, and in that capacity entertained the collector of the revenue when he came to gather the hearth-money. Mr. Bagwell, such was the collector's name, was lying one winter's night in bed at Burke's house when Burke's eldest son came drunk into the room with a fiddler and a servant, and held a candle to the collector's nose.

Springing out of bed Bagwell snatched a stick out of young Burke's hands, bade him leave the room, and after a scuffle drove him out and locked the door.

In the morning young Burke sent Bagwell a challenge. Bagwell replied that he was in Loughrea on the service of the Government. He had neither time nor inclination for such fool's play as duelling, and sent the messenger about his business.

Upon this the family chose to consider that they had been grossly insulted. Ancient habits and manners lingered in Galway. The old gentleman informed his son, that 'if he did not bring him gentleman's or kerne's or churl's satisfaction' out of a man who had struck a Burke, he would never own him more.

The youth promised obedience. In the evening he collected a party of ruffians in the yard, sent in word to the collector that some one wanted to speak with him, and when he appeared set upon him with a loaded whip, broke his skull, and left him for dead.

A commissioner of the revenue in the neighbourhood, hearing of Mr. Bagwell's treatment, applied for a company of soldiers from Portumna barracks to take young Burke prisoner, and bring him to Dublin for trial. A civil warrant, he said, would be useless, *for the offender's father, being a magistrate, could procure any number of villains to prevent it from being executed.* Were 'a Burke tried at the Galway assizes he had so many relations and namesakes that no verdict could be procured against him.' Moreover, without soldiers, neither



The heads of a bill were prepared, providing that no convert should be admitted to office under the Crown if his family were brought up as Catholics, nor till seven years after his conversion. England attempted resistance, but was eventually obliged to comply. The condition of the bar offering a strong temptation to the heirs of pardoned families to sue for recovery of their estates, the heads of a similar bill affecting barristers and solicitors were sent over in 1727,<sup>1</sup> backed with the earnest recommendation of Archbishop Boulter. The bill had been drawn by his advice so as not to touch Papists, but only persons calling themselves Protestants; 'foreign ministers therefore,' he said, 'could not, with decency, object.'<sup>1</sup> Foreign ministers did not, in the present instance, constitute the difficulty. England was deliberately undoing the efforts of past legislation in favour of the Catholics for its own immediate convenience. The Solicitors and Barristers Bill was refused. It was again sent over in 1731, and again rejected. The Irish Parliament, however, was determined. In 1734, on the third trial, England gave way; and it became the

he nor his accomplices could be taken at all, or, if taken, be conveyed to the county gaol.—'Information of Samuel Bagwell taken before John Carr, Chief Commissioner of the Revenue.' *MSS.* Dublin, 1729.

Bagwell recovered from his broken head, but retained a bitter recollection of his adventure. In 1743 he writes from Tipperary, 'I have a large walk in this country,

some parts of it being wild and well stocked with the vermin called Papists, who, I fear, will destroy me when I am amongst them upon my collection.'—'Samuel Bagwell to Secretary Poulton, March 14, 1743.' *MSS.* Dublin.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Primate to the Duke of Newcastle, March 7, 1728.' *MSS.* Record Office.

law of Ireland that no one should practise as a solicitor who had not been a Protestant from his 14th year, or unless he had been five years articled to some clerk in chancery in England or Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 7 George II. cap. 5.

## SECTION II.

ANOTHER Act, of still greater consequence, experienced a yet more significant opposition. The Irish  
 1730 Catholics, after the revolution, had been disarmed. With the semi-feudal habits which survived in Ireland far into the last century, it was the custom of Irish gentlemen to ride abroad armed and attended by large numbers of servants with sword and pistols. In the absence of police, and amidst the still widely prevailing lawlessness, each householder was obliged to undertake the defence of his own home and family. An armoury and a supply of muskets and pikes formed part of the ordinary furniture of a country house. If no restrictions had been placed upon the Catholics, their numbers would have enabled them to extemporize a force which might rekindle the civil war. As a pledge for the security of the public peace, the right to possess arms in these large quantities was limited to those who were in fact its guardians, and Catholics were restricted to their fowling-pieces.

Galled by a distinction which was a badge of distrust and inferiority, and encouraged by the obvious determination of the English Government to paralyze the penal laws as far as Ireland would allow them, the Catholic gentry, at the beginning of the reign of George II., openly resumed their swords, and were believed to have collected stores of arms, like the

Protestants, in their houses. The magistrates had a power by law to issue search warrants; but if they used such a power, they were likely to be murdered, or burnt in their beds. If they escaped Irish vengeance, they fell under the displeasure of the English Government. The memories of 1641 and of 1690 were still too recent for the Protestants to feel anything but dismay, if those who, in the speeches from the throne were still called their enemies, were allowed quietly to resume the means of destroying them. They were as a garrison set to hold a conquered country. Placed in a position which experience had shewn to be supremely perilous, they had undertaken the service in return for the lands of which the inhabitants had been deprived, and they knew themselves to be the objects of the enduring hatred of the dispossessed proprietors. The means originally intended to complete the conquest had been abandoned. The policy pursued towards Irish industry had thinned their numbers, destroyed their employments, taken from them the only means by which Ireland could have been reconciled to their rule; and, because they dared to complain, the persons whom they were set in their places to control, who regarded the Protestant settlers as aliens and robbers, were being allowed quietly to recover the means of recommencing a struggle which at best would be bloody and dangerous.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1730, a Catholic gentleman was

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Primate to the Duke of Newcastle, December 4, 1731.'  
MSS. Record Office.

indicted at Galway for carrying arms in the streets. His religion was avowed; the fact was not disputed. The defence was that the Disarming Act applied only to persons who were alive at the time that it was passed, and on this ground he was acquitted.<sup>1</sup> The Dublin Catholics at once put on their swords, at once carried pistols in their holsters; and, when they rode into the country, had their half-score or score of armed servants behind them. Two years later, as if deliberately to assert the re-establishment of their right, Lord Gormanston and one of the Barnwells, both Catholics, appeared with swords at the assizes at Trim.

They were both popular men, and against them individually there was no ill-feeling; but the grand jury, 'men of fortune, and several of them members of Parliament,' feeling that acquiescence would be a public sanction to the Galway interpretation of the law, met the challenge as boldly as it was made. Gormanston and Barnwell were indicted under the old Disarming Act, and the question was referred to the Dublin judges for decision. The Viceroy, then the Duke of Dorset, was absent in England. An attempt made by the Irish Parliament to pass an explanatory act had been defeated in England by the action of a Catholic agency there. The Catholics had been heard to boast that they could ensure the failure of all future attempts to take their weapons from them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'In fact,' says Boulter, 'it was drawn so ill as to leave room | for that opinion.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Boulter to Newcastle, Decem-

The Lords Justices, the Primate, the Chancellor, and the Speaker of the House of Commons wrote to entreat the Viceroy that the law might be left to take its course, and that the opportunity might not be lost of enforcing respect to authority. Lord Gormanston's behaviour 'was considered by the grand jury as a defiance of the law in the face of the country.' 'The prosecution,' they said, in evident fear that they would be blamed, 'was not an act of the Government: all that they had done had been 'to decline to interpose in

ber 4, 1731.' *MSS.* Record Office. An investigation in the Irish House of Commons in 1733 revealed the means by which money was raised to defeat all bills in England which the Irish Catholics disapproved. They affected to believe that the attempt to disarm them implied an intention 'to extirpate their religion, and that it was not to be saved except by money.' Collections were made at the chapel doors all over Ireland. Dublin was the focus of the agitation, where the Catholics had confessedly least cause to complain. In the country there was inexplicable languor. 'I am sorry,' writes one of the Dublin committee to an agent in the south, 'that with all your exertions you can raise so little in the city and suburbs of so considerable a place as Cork, in the face of the terrible apprehensions most of us have. . . . We don't like pressing the clergy who are so poor, but the clergy should work on their flocks, and not leave the burden upon us

who live at Dublin, who have much more just reason to be excused upon this occasion than those who live remote from the Government, and are always soonest oppressed. I am sorry to find the gentlemen in most parts of the country do not show so great a regard to religion or liberty. We should have but little hope of putting out those bills here if we should have the misfortune of their returning from England without amendments. Our greatest efforts must be to stop them on that side. We want money, therefore, at once.'—'Wolf to Nagle, December 25, 1733.' *Commons' Journals*, December 19, 1733.

Walpole's Cabinet, it appears, took bribes as well as gave them. The necessity of providing money to stop bills, which were either just or unjust—which, if just, ought to have been returned—if unjust, to have been rejected on their demerits, adds the last touch to this detestable picture.

the common course of justice.' 'They flattered themselves that it could not be taken amiss by any foreign court when truly informed of the circumstances, and of the great lenity generally shown to Catholics in Ireland.' The two offenders 'might not be convicted' after all; and, if they were convicted, the Government might pardon them if it was thought expedient.<sup>1</sup>

The trial was, perhaps, hurried over in anticipation of the expected answer from England. Gormanston and his companion were found guilty, apologized, and received a pardon, at the unanimous petition of the grand jury.

But the assertion of the law was deprived of its force by the imbecility of the Viceroy and his masters. The Disarming Act had not been rejected in order that, by the judges' construction, the existing statutes should be declared still to be in force. The Lords Justices were reprimanded for allowing the prosecution to be pressed; and Dorset confessed, in the terms of his reproof, that the administration of law in Ireland was dependent on the pleasure of the foreign Catholic Powers.

'I submit it to your Excellencies,' the Viceroy wrote, 'how this matter may be looked upon abroad, when a law made to prevent such disturbances from Papists as may affect the public peace and welfare of these kingdoms shall appear to have been executed with rigour at a time when all things are quiet and peaceable, and no danger could arise to the public

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Lords Justices to the Duke of Dorset.' *MSS.* Dublin, 1733.

tranquillity from the indiscretion of these gentlemen who presumed to wear swords without a licence.'<sup>1</sup>

The grand jury and the Lords Justices had desired only to intimate to the Catholics that the law was still binding upon them. They were made to <sup>1739</sup> understand that, whether it was binding or extinct, the Irish Catholics were not to be interfered with except in time of war, or when there was present imminence of rebellion. They were to be left undisturbed to prepare at their leisure for action when a foreign quarrel should give them an opportunity. The Irish Protestant gentlemen, on whose heads the tempest would fall, were unable to regard the proposal with the same equanimity. The treachery of England towards them compelled them to persevere in a course which tended more and more to embitter their relations with the people. They continued to insist on a Disarming Act as indispensable for Ireland's safety, and England continued to resist; until, in 1739, her ministers found themselves on the edge of a rupture with Spain. When danger brought them to their senses, they remembered that the Protestants formed after all the sole part of the population of Ireland on whose loyalty they could rely in time of trial, and wavered back to a policy of coercion, which was doubly galling because it had been so long suspended.

Encouraged by England's attitude towards them the Irish Catholics had begun naturally to hope for a

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Dorset to the Lords Justices, July 7, 1733.' *MSS.* Dublin Castle.



complete repeal of each and all of their disabilities. In 1739 they presented an address to George the Second, thanking him for the toleration which they enjoyed, and professing the most ardent loyalty.

‘They had a just abhorrence,’ they said, ‘for their forefathers’ primitive actions.’ They detested ‘the thought of rebellion to aid a foreign power against his majesty’s interests.’ ‘They had acquired fortunes by trade, which they desired to invest in land, and found themselves prevented by the severity of the law.’ ‘They were oppressed by idle and wicked vagrants informing against their titles, leases, and tenements;’ and they had thought, they said, of emigrating to some country where ‘they might reap the benefits of their labours,’ ‘and leave some stake in lands to their posterity which would secure them to be faithful subjects of the princes under whom they lived.’ But they preferred, if it might be permitted, to remain loyal subjects of the English Crown. ‘Money,’ they said, ‘laid out in improving a long lease’ would be a security for their good behaviour; and more dependence could be placed on them when they had given a guarantee for their good conduct, than ‘as long as they had their effects in their pockets.’<sup>1</sup>

The time was coming when the lesson of the Reformation would have been really learnt, when Catholic gentlemen would have discovered that, without abandoning their faith, they could be in truth and

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Address of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, September 26, 1739.’  
*MSS. Record Office.*

sincerity good subjects of a Protestant Government ; that the Pope had neither in theory nor fact a right to meddle with their temporal allegiance. When religion was no longer made use of as a cloke or a palliation for political conspiracy, demands for the relaxation of the penal laws could be presented boldly, and could not be refused. But the experience of centuries was not to be set aside and obliterated by the good behaviour of one generation ; and the revival of the old pretensions to control the policy of the Irish Government, which has been the fruit of completed toleration, raises a doubt whether concession was not after all premature. The suspicion attaching to the representatives of a creed which has dyed its garments in blood so deep as Romanism has done will only finally disappear when the heads of a Church which sanctioned the atrocities of the Inquisition has with equal solemnity condemned them. Earnest Catholics, at present, seem rather bent on justifying the fetters in which it was found necessary to chain them ; they still refuse the acknowledgments which are due to the conscience of Europe ; and, rather than make frank confession of their fathers' sins, they take refuge in dishonest evasions, or in audacious denials of the established truths of history.

The Catholics who addressed themselves to George the Second were in a more wholesome frame of mind. The cowardice of modern Protestants, <sup>1740</sup> who disavow and condemn a policy which merits no blame and needs no apology, had not yet taught them how much they might dare with impunity. They could

admit without disguise or shame their forefathers' guilt. They affected to believe, and, being humbled into good sense, perhaps they really felt that they had been treated with leniency. The day of emancipation was coming, coming as the gift in part of that very Irish Parliament which they now dreaded as their oppressor. But it had not come yet; nor was it by rapes and abductions, by houghing cattle, by perjured conversions, by juggling lawsuits, or by purchased advocacy in the back corners of the English Cabinet, that they would hasten its arrival. War was declared by England against Spain a month after the presentation of the petition. It was discovered that, while these gentlemen, on behalf of part of the Catholic community, were affecting so profound a loyalty, the flights of the Pretender's Wild Geese from the Kerry rivers were never more numerous. Letters intercepted from Irish residents in Spain shadowed out an intended invasion. Count Dillon was reported to be himself in Munster organizing an insurrection; and hot patriots declared 'nothing to be more certain than that a bloody war would break out all over Ireland in six months.'<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Devonshire, who succeeded Dorset in the viceroyalty, recognized and admitted a peculiar insolence in the Catholic attitude; and the necessity of listening to the demand for the Disarming Act became apparent at last even at St. James's.

The Cabinet gave way, but so gave way as in yield-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Bernard Ward to his father at Carrigham, Ross. From Madrid, August 29, 1739.' MSS. Record Office.

ing to secure themselves from Catholic resentment. Though legislation on the subject was confessed to be necessary, the Duke of Devonshire was not permitted to recommend it from the throne. He was instructed to leave the initiative to the Irish Parliament, to take no part, and to avoid all appearance of taking part, 'that an answer might be the more easily given to foreign Princes who would interfere.'<sup>1</sup>

The Parliament accepted a responsibility which ought not to have been thus exclusively thrown upon it. Instead of the concessions which the petition of the Catholics demanded, the heads of a Disarming Bill were at once introduced. They were heard in Council in objection; their arguments were answered; and the Viceroy transmitted the bill to England with a story which showed conclusively that the time was not ripe for trusting the Irish nation with larger liberties. A colony of Quakers in Kildare had celebrated the Fifth of November with the usual bonfire. Their chapel and an adjoining house were immediately burnt by a mob. A company of soldiers was sent to arrest the ring-leaders in the outrage. The entire Catholic population rose in fury, swearing that all the Quakers and all the county of Kildare should not hang them; and a large military force alone saved Naas gaol from sharing the fate of the chapel.<sup>2</sup>

Rumours were flying that a Spanish camp had been

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Devonshire to the Duke of Newcastle, October 12, 1739.' 'The Duke of Newcastle to the Duke of Devonshire, November 8, 1739.' *MSS. Record Office.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Devonshire to Newcastle, January 12, 1740.' *Ibid.*

formed in Galicia. French officers were discovered enlisting recruits at Limerick; English regiments were being tampered with; and deserters had gone off with the Wild Geese.<sup>1</sup> The Government, too happy that the Irish Parliament had been bolder than themselves, returned the Bill, which was immediately passed. The depleted arsenals were again fully supplied. Authority once more dared to assert itself. Disaffection cowered again into its hiding-place with instant submissiveness; and to this one effort of resolution, after so long and so mischievous a struggle, Ireland owed the unbroken quiet in the rebellion of 1745, of which, by some absurd irony, the indulgent rule of Lord Chesterfield has gained the exclusive credit.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Devonshire to Newcastle, March 18, 1740.'

## SECTION III.

For the half century intervening between the Duke of Grafton's government and the revolt of the American colonies, Ireland was without a history. The fruits of misgovernment were steadily growing. Each year the seeds of future disorder were sown over a wider area. Each year the Celts grew stronger, the English Protestants more helpless to stem the evils which the wise among them too plainly perceived. Viceroy succeeded Viceroy, resided for a quarter or half a year while the Parliament was sitting, and left the administration to Lords Justices, who, powerless for good, came gradually to value authority for the opportunities of patronage. England governed Ireland for what she deemed her own interest, making her calculation on the gross balance of her trade ledgers; and leaving her moral obligations to accumulate, as if right and wrong had been blotted out of the statute-book of the universe. Ireland's great men—for great men were born in Ireland as elsewhere—drifted away out of a scene where no road was open to honourable aspiration. Her politicians were persons who, for the most part, had no prospects elsewhere; her second best, for her best had made their homes in England. For fifty years there were no men in the Irish Parliament deserving to be called eminent. The periodic agitations were without defined purpose, and were the expressions merely of pain from chronic

sores, which, day by day, grew more inflamed. Three-fifths of the rents were carried to London or Bath, or the Continent, where the so-called gentry of Ireland forgot their duties, and concealed their nationality. Her aristocracy left their estates to agents, and if their bankers' balance was satisfactory, asked no questions as to how their dues were levied. Her men of talent, who should have given her a national art and a national literature, her distinguished lawyers and physicians, and men of science, passed to the country which offered fairer rewards to eminence, and social intercourse in which it was possible to feel at home. Ireland herself, cursed with a separate legislature, and with a nationality which revived under oppression, was drained of every element which could have given her firmness and consistency, and was left to flounder from calamity to calamity.<sup>1</sup> Rank, genius, wealth, intellectual cultivation, all, or almost all, that could have given vigour to her legislation, and tone to her society, forsook her. Her code of laws were an institute of anarchy, so

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<sup>1</sup> A condition apparently inevitable in all dependent countries in times when the first duty of man lies in the making and enjoying his own fortune. Rome prolonged her empire by recruiting from the provinces her bar, her senate, and her armies. Spain, Gaul, Africa, the East were all emasculated that Rome might be strong. Similarly at the present day men of business accumulate fortunes in Australia to spend them in London. Politicians win distinction in colonial legislatures as a step to greatness in the Imperial Parliament. Colonies which aspire to preserve their wealth and talents for themselves, will inevitably seek independence, unless they are identified with the mother country, and share with it to the full its glories and its privileges. There is no wholesome alternative between entire assimilation, and a separation so complete as to create a pride in a distinct nationality.

administered as to turn authority into a jest, and so contrived as to make law a synonym of iniquity.

The more honour is due to the few families who, great in character or in rank, remained at their stations—families in whom traditions of the past century were not yet wholly extinct, who recognized that they owned Irish soil for some better purpose than to squeeze materials of luxury out of the tillers of it. Yet even these were driven gradually into disaffection, as they saw their efforts to save their country blighted or cast aside.

With extreme difficulty they at last obtained their Tillage Bill, though shorn of the bounties which would have given it vitality. It was reduced to <sup>1729</sup> an injunction that out of every hundred acres of land in cultivation five must be under the plough; and, still more unfortunately, no means were provided to enforce even this obligation, the neglect of which brought the rising of the Whiteboys.<sup>1</sup>

Working on the foundation of the Charter Schools, they carried measures which needed only to have been executed to have swept poverty out of Ireland. In 1715, they passed an Act empowering the ministers and churchwardens in every parish to apprentice children

<sup>1</sup> The Protestant absentee landlords treated their duties generally with a cynical completeness of contempt. The report of 1729 on the causes of the Protestant emigration from Ulster says, 'that their agents habitually let the lands by auction to the highest bidder; they turned Protestant tenants out of their holdings, without compensation for improvements, and let the farms to Catholics on short leases, and at rack rents.'—'Report on the Causes of the Emigration, June 6, 1729.' *MSS.* Record Office.



who were found begging to substantial Protestant house-keepers or tradesmen.<sup>1</sup> The parishes were bound by the common law to support foundling and orphan children. It was found that to evade the cost the overseers thrust helpless little creatures under six years of age from parish to parish, and while the authorities were disputing over the charge of their maintenance, the objects of their cruelty often perished. Workhouses were established in consequence in Dublin, and afterwards in most other large towns, where the governors were required to take charge of such children, to educate them on the Charter School principles, and afterwards to bind them out.<sup>2</sup>

In 1729 the administration of justice in Ireland came under the notice of Parliament: the Mayor and Corporation of Dublin were found to be drawing a handsome revenue out of extortions practised upon prisoners. Out of thirteen aldermen, seven only acted as magistrates; and each of the seven had a gang of constables specially depending on him. Their clerks were provided with blank warrants, in which they entered what names they pleased, and by arresting innocent persons and extorting fees for the cost of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Whereas there are in every part of this kingdom numbers of helpless children who are forced to beg, and, if care be not taken of their education, will become not only unprofitable, but dangerous to their country; whereas it is hoped that many may be entertained in comfortable service, and others bred up in useful callings if well-

disposed persons could have a fair prospect of receiving a return by the labour of poor children suitable to the charge of training them;' the Act provides for the application of the general apprenticeship system, as it was in use in England.—2 George I. cap. 17.

<sup>2</sup> 3 George II. cap. 3. 9 George II. cap. 5.

detention, and afterwards for the favour of release, turned poorly paid offices into a source of abundant incomes for master and for man.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here is a specimen out of many cases which came before the House of Commons:—

'John Bryan having lost some plate, and hearing from two constables of Alderman Bolton that one Margaret McCabe had stolen it, the alderman's clerk issued a warrant for her and her daughter, a child of eleven. They were arrested and taken, the child to Bridewell, and the mother to the Black Dog, the debtors' prison, where those who could pay for it were allowed what was called better treatment; the child as a favour was allowed to join her there. They were brought the next day before the alderman, when *nothing* being proved against them they were released, but not until the mother had paid the following bill:—

To the alderman's clerk to remove her daughter from Bridewell to the Black Dog.	£0	2	8½
Fees and expenses for herself and daughter there . . . . .	0	11	0
To Alderman Bolton next day on being discharged . . . . .	0	10	10
To his clerk at the same time . . . . .		14	2
For liquors drunk at the clerk's house at her expense . . . . .	0	3	0
	<hr/>		
	£2	1	8½

The prisons were dens of infamy and extortion. The sheriff marshal, whose salary as keeper of Newgate was ten pounds a year, was found to make his place worth on an average nearly 1200*l.*

Newgate meant a dungeon, starvation, and irons. The sheriff marshal was allowed a separate gaol of his own called the Black Dog, the management of which he deputed to his sub-sheriff at 20*l.* a year. At both prisons he made a trade of 'vending liquors.' Each prisoner consigned, though but for a night, to the Black Dog was taxed two shillings for a treat, and, if he refused, was beaten and stripped. The charge for a bed was a shilling a night. Each room was a mere closet; and in many of these closets were five beds. In each bed three, four, or five persons were set to sleep if the place was crowded, and two shillings were extorted from each. The sheriff marshal's wife collected the rents. When a prisoner's money was gone he was passed down into a dungeon, lighted from a common sewer, 12 feet square and 8 feet high, called the Nunnery, where the strolling women were lodged. The place so stunk from the sewers, that the House of Commons' committee could only remain long enough to measure the dimensions. Fourteen and sometimes twenty women were placed there of a night. If

Newgate was a Crown prison. The master of it was a Crown officer. It could scarcely be pleaded that a proper administration of the gaol could be dangerous to English trade; and, in the absence of difficulties on the score of trade, the Castle authorities might have been reasonably expected to see that these places were decently managed. The House of Commons had the merit of dragging to light the deadly evidence of shameful and insolent neglect, and, so far as lay in them, purged out and reformed the foul abuses which were found rampant there. Felons, after this, were regularly and rapidly transported, sold to planters in the colonies, and paid in their persons for the cost of sending them out.

Other more ordinary work, too, was not forgotten.

1732 Roads were made, which were the admiration of Arthur Young; canals were cut; bogs were drained; a new Parliament house was built, with both thrift and skill, for a fourth of the sum for which the same building could be erected to-day.<sup>1</sup> New streets and squares sprung up in Dublin, which, if without

they attempted to come out for air and light they were beaten back.

Newgate, when the committee visited it, was found choking with prisoners. Wretched objects were lying naked on the ground, some dying, some dead of cold and hunger. Some had been four days without food of any kind. The committee enquired what allowance of bread was made to the Crown prisoners, and found *that the*

*custom of allowing bread had been for some time discontinued.* The stench among the naked starving felons was so intolerable that the committee fled after a stay of half a minute. — *Commons' Journals*, October 15, 1729, vol. viii. Appendix.

<sup>1</sup> The entire cost scarcely exceeded 34,000*l.* See the *Commons' Journals*.

beauty, show in their stability, within and without, that the art of doing good work had been learnt, and not as yet cast aside. Glimpses show themselves at times, in the transactions of Parliament, of high spiritual aims. As late as 1771, the Commons made an attack upon drunkenness, and passed heads of a bill to suspend the whiskey distilling which, as they said, was demoralizing the country. Lord Townshend, then Viceroy, informed the English ministry that the House had the bill exceedingly at heart,<sup>1</sup> that it was generally popular, and would give content and satisfaction throughout the kingdom; and a measure which had no other object than to encourage sobriety would have actually passed into law had not England, in the capacity of guardian of human freedom, interfered. The dawning science of political economy had discovered that Governments are unconcerned with morality. Besides the interference with the natural liberty of the subject, it was found that, to pass the Bill, would involve a loss to the excise.

One other creditable measure has to be mentioned, which was not extorted from England or English jealousy, but from the bigotry of the bench of bishops of both countries. The learned prelates, who denied the validity of Presbyterian marriages, and prosecuted kirk elders for concubinage, were so impressed with the solemnity of a sacrament performed by a competently ordained priest, that a ceremony by which a

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<sup>1</sup> ' Lord Townshend to the Earl of Rochfort, March 27, 1771.'  
*MSS.* Record Office.

Protestant girl had been tied by force to any villain who had carried her off and ravished her, they persisted in regarding as an indissoluble bond. Until all such unions were declared null and void, no effort to check the practice was of the least avail. At length, in 1732, the Irish bishops were brought to yield, and the heads of a satisfactory bill were sent over for approbation to London.<sup>1</sup> Objections were anticipated from 'their brethren in England;' and the expectation was too justly fulfilled. The bill was set aside, 'as of an extraordinary nature,'<sup>2</sup> and the ravishing continued merrily without interruption. In 1735, after some outrage more flagrant than usual, there was a partial concession. When the sufferer was a lady of fortune, the English bench consented that, after a tedious and expensive suit in the ecclesiastical courts, a marriage might be set aside.<sup>3</sup> The distinction between rich and poor was felt to be odious. The House of Commons insisted, in 1743, that all such marriages should

1743 be, *ipso facto*, void. The bishops resisted with the most determined obstinacy; they were willing to

<sup>1</sup> 'I believe you know it is a common practice in Ireland for a tall, strong Papist to hurry away a pretty girl with a good fortune into the mountains, and there commit acts of horror and violation, and that the poor undone maid is glad at any rate to be made an honest woman. This is readily performed by the holy men who are at hand to assist their lay friends on such occasions. These outrages, besides

many other evils arising from forced and clandestine marriages, have engaged the bench of Irish bishops to come into this law. How it will be relished by their brethren in England you will have an opportunity to observe.'—'W. Cary to Secretary Delafaye, January 2, 1732.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'List of Irish bills rejected, February, 1732.' *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> 9 George II. cap. 11.

declare a separation by their own spiritual authority ; they protested against ‘ disannulling a marriage.’ The Commons declared that the principle had been conceded in the Act already passed, and that farmers’ daughters had as good a right to protection as heir-esses.<sup>1</sup> The bishops shut their ears. The struggle was protracted for two years, and it was not till 1745, under the viceroyalty of Lord Chesterfield, that their preposterous and grotesque resistance could be at last overcome. In a bill then drawn by the Commons, every marriage performed by a Popish priest between Protestant and Protestant, or between Protestant and Papist, was unreservedly declared to be null. The heads which contained these sweeping clauses were carried in the Commons without a dissentient voice. They were presented to Chesterfield by the Speaker, attended by the entire House. The Speaker represented that, by these marriages, more than by any other cause, Protestant settlements were broken up, family ties dissolved, and the worst specimens of the Catholic clergy supported and encouraged. Chesterfield himself endorsed the opinions of the Lower House.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The Duke of Devonshire to the Duke of Newcastle, December 25.’ 1743. | roy’s and Council’s Letter.’ MSS. Dublin, 1745. 19 George II. cap. 13, *Irish Statutes*.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Heads of a Bill, with Vice-

## SECTION IV.

IN the country as well as in Dublin there were Protestant gentlemen who, so far as their strength extended, were making amends for the imbecility of the Government. Those who have read Arthur Young's *Tour in Ireland*, have accompanied him to the houses of great Peers and Commoners, where stately manners, high motives, and refined intelligence were as conspicuous as in the noblest families of England; where the privileges of a ruling class produced the virtues of a true aristocracy, in contrast to the vices which degraded the baser members of the same order. Gross as was the degeneracy of the majority, a chosen few were still spending their fortunes in improving agriculture, in reclaiming mountain and morass, in building schools and churches, conscious of the duties which they owed to the people, and earning their gratitude and affectionate devotion by the unselfish fidelity with which those duties were discharged. Scattered thinly over the four provinces, the salt of the country, they continued, generation after generation, in brave and honourable execution of a work which brought its own reward with it: they sate enthroned in the imagination of the peasantry as their natural rulers; the Banshees wailed for them when they died; the 'good people' took them under their protection, as they in turn were the protectors of

the poor. Out of these families have risen many of the most brilliant officers of the English army, the most illustrious ornaments of the English House of Commons. In their own country, occasionally, we are brought face to face with one or other of them when selected in time of trouble for some special work of difficulty or danger: we are enabled to see the metal of which they were composed, and to admire the use which the Government thought fit to make of them.

Galway, lying on the Atlantic, with its open harbour, was the most vulnerable point of the island. Through Galway the priests had free egress and ingress. Galway was the second, if not the greatest, depôt of the smuggling trade. The Articles of Galway had left the Catholics in unbroken strength there. The Houghers had thinned the Protestant settlers. Whenever an invasion was contemplated, Galway was the spot where a foreign contingent was most sure of finding a favourable reception. 'The Protestant interest of Connaught,' said an Act of Parliament in 1717, depended on the loyalty of that single town, yet no care had been taken to strengthen the Protestant element there. As Galway was in 1717, so it continued, governed by a corporation of Catholics, who had perjured themselves as a qualification for office. The penal laws, neglected everywhere, were in Galway openly defied. The handful of troops in the castle were left to themselves, undisciplined and disorganized. Nunneries and friaries were multiplied. Smugglers loaded and unloaded at the quay. If, for decency's



sake, on the appearance of a commissioner of the revenue, it was necessary to put on an appearance of energy, due notice to the offenders beforehand secured the futility of the search warrant. Although the country remained undisturbed in the rebellion of 1745, yet in the extreme west the Disarming Act had been enforced imperfectly. It had been long notorious that in Galway, as in Kerry, recruits and money had been regularly levied for the Pretender. Prudence required that the town should not be left entirely in the hands of the Pretender's friends, and, in 1747, an officer, who had served at Culloden, Colonel Stratford Eyre, son of Mr. Eyre, who had been governor of Galway in 1715, was sent by the Government to command there. Colonel Eyre, who had been born and educated in the country, understood the ways of it. He found himself set to defend a town of which the walls had not been repaired for a quarter of a century; the castle in ruins; the very name of military authority forgotten. By law no Catholics ought to have been in Galway at all. There were thirty Catholics there to one Protestant, and the Protestant was becoming Protestant but in name. There were 180 ecclesiastics, Jesuits, friars, and seculars. Robert Martin, owner of half Connemara, resided within the liberties. He was described by Eyre as 'able to bring to the town of Galway in twenty-four hours 800 villains as desperate and as absolutely at his devotion as Cameron of Lochiel.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Col. Eyre to Secretary Wayte, November 20, 1747.' *MSS.* Dublin.

The Mayor and Corporation, the fee-simple of whose united property did not amount to 1000*l.*, received the tolls and customs duties. By their charter they were bound in return to maintain the fortifications. Being what they were, they preferred to divide the town revenue amongst themselves. The mayor, an O'Hara, was the son of Lord Tyrawley's footman; the sheriff was a beggar; of the aldermen one was a poor shoemaker, the other a broken dragoon. In conformity with the usual Castle policy, Colonel Eyre was directed to act in harmony with the civil authorities; on taking possession of his office he furnished the Secretary with a specimen of the manner in which the funds were appropriated by them.<sup>1</sup>

From the Corporation there was no help to be looked for; Colonel Eyre, being made responsible for the town, had no leisure to wait till he could bring the Mayor and Aldermen to a sense of their duty. He re-established discipline in the garrison with a strong

<sup>1</sup> Last Saturday, the 20th of February, the Corporation of Galway gave their favourite, Mr. Fitzpatrick, for his services in supporting the rights of the corporation . . . . .	£900 0	for calling him a Papist . . . . .	£27 0
To Mr. O'Hara for do. . . . .	120 0	To Mr. Ellis for money he paid ten years ago on a contested election . . . . .	27 0
To Mr. Blake for his expenses in taking out a mandamus . . . . .	45 10	Given to the farmers of the markets in the year 1744 on account of losses that year . . . . .	72 0
To Mr. Cooke for defending the Corporation against the mandamus . . . . .	91 0	To Alderman Ch. Gerry for his services as chamberlain . . . . .	192 0
To Mr. Miles for prosecuting Domenick Lynch		<i>MSS.</i> Dublin Castle, February 27, 1747.	

hand ; he himself stopped the gaps in the walls where they had fallen down ; and, taking the reins with a firm hand, he gave orders for the gates to be closed, as was usual in garrison towns, at sunset.

The Corporation had not laid open Galway to all comers, that a soldier from the army of the hated Duke of Cumberland should come thus amongst them, interfering with their pleasant habits, and making himself their master. They sent in a complaint, largely signed, against the innovation of the locked gates. The streets of Galway, they said, must be free at all hours of day and night, without sentinels, or inconvenient persons, to restrain the citizens in their goings and comings.

Colonel Eyre, who was at no loss to understand their meaning, sent for them, and told them distinctly he could not comply. He was sent to Galway, he said, to restore discipline, and he meant to do it. Galway was a garrison town, and the rules of garrison towns should be enforced. No one would be really inconvenienced by the closing of the gates at sunset, except those who were breaking the law, either smugglers, or nuns and friars who had no right to be in Ireland, or else devotees who haunted their chapels. He declared distinctly that he did not mean to look through his fingers. He intended to do his own duty, and he intended also that they should do theirs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel Eyre's words have something of a Cromwellian ring about them.

'And now, gentlemen,' he continued, 'since you are here in your

corporate capacity, I must recommend you to disperse those restless Popish ecclesiastics. Let me not meet them in every corner of the streets when I walk as I have

Here, evidently, was a man with the spirit in him of a true ruler ; a man beyond all others fit to govern a people like the Irish ; beyond all others certain, if not interfered with, to command their affection and obedience. Such a man England ought specially to have valued ; but England's stomach had grown feeble. She had lost her nerve, and was frightened at shadows. Though Eyre spoke boldly his mind misgave him ; he wrote to Secretary Wayte to entreat that the Castle would stand by him. He even determined to see the Viceroy himself, and was going to Dublin for the purpose. Being threatened with assassination,<sup>1</sup> and a day fixed for his death, he stayed in Galway unhappily

done. No sham searches, Mr. Sheriff, as to my knowledge you lately made. Your birds were flown, but they left you cakes and wine to entertain yourselves withal. I shall send you, Mr. Mayor, a list of some insolent unregistered priests, who absolutely refused me to quarter my soldiers, and to my surprise you have billeted none on them. These and James Fitzgerald, who is also an unregistered priest, and had the insolence to solicit votes for his brother upon a prospect of a vacancy in Parliament, I expect you'll please to tender the oaths to, and proceed against on the Galway and Limerick Act. Let us unite together in keeping those turbulent disqualified townsmen in a due subjection. Lastly, gentlemen, I put you in mind of the condition on which tolls and customs are granted to you. Repair the breaches

in these walls and pave your streets.' — 'Speech at Galway, 1747, enclosed to Secretary Wayte.' *MSS.* Dublin.

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir, as I had not the pleasure of seeing you since you came to your government of Galway, I hope soon to see you in the Elysian fields, as I am just going off the stage. And I am sure, if you don't leave that town, you'll lose your life before the 10th of next month. 'Tis all your own fault, for you could not bear the employment which you got, not for your bravery, but for the slaughter you committed on poor people after Culloden fight. You'll be served as Lord Lovat's agent was. God be merciful to your soul.' — 'Anonymous letter enclosed by Eyre to Secretary Wayte, December 11, 1747. *Ibid.*

till the date was passed; and the delay was fatal. The Mayor was beforehand with him. His Excellency, convinced of the moral excellence and innocent intentions of the Galway Corporation, overruled Eyre's orders, forbade him to interfere, by inconvenient restrictions, with the pursuits of the inhabitants; bade him understand, in short, that although if mischief came he might pay with his head for it, nevertheless, it was the pleasure of the Castle that nothing should be done which could give umbrage to the Catholics of Ireland.

The consequences were immediate and characteristic. The governor was at the mercy of the townsmen, and might now be insulted with impunity. A follower of Robert Martin, a Connemara boy, named Brennan, marched ostentatiously past the sentinel at the bridge, carrying a gun and pistol. The man being notoriously a Catholic, the sentinel took them from him; and Eyre politely returned them to Martin with a message, that if he was sending arms into the town, he had better for the future send them by persons qualified to carry such things. Martin refused to receive back his property: Eyre, finding his courtesies rejected, declared that he would enforce the law, and confiscate both gun and pistol. The assizes were coming on, and Martin,<sup>1</sup> to try the experiment in the present humour of the authorities, whether as a Pro-

<sup>1</sup> Robert Martin, Esq.,

Pr.

Stratford Eyre, Esq.

Dt.

By the Lords Jus-  
tices of assize for

the Connaught  
circuit.

The defendant is hereby re-  
quired personally to appear before  
us at 8 o'clock in Galway on the

testant he had not a right to send a Catholic servant on such an errand, brought an action against the governor to recover the value of what had been taken.

What else could have been expected? Enclosing this singular document to the secretary, Eyre ventured to insist that it was the immediate consequence of his own treatment. If the law was to be thus openly insulted, he said, Government would become impossible, and neither the Popery Act, nor any other act, could be enforced in any part of Ireland. For himself, 'he could not stand his ground unless the restraint was taken off which the Lord Lieutenant has been pleased to lay on him.' The eyes of the authorities remained unopened. Martin got a verdict. Eyre continued governor of Galway, but was confined practically to his military duties; and with so plain an indication that they might do what they pleased without danger of interference, the Galway townsmen made haste to extinguish the small remains that were left of the Protestant colony. The Governor was obliged to look on passively while a Protestant grammar school,

6th of April next, to answer the plaintiff's bill for 5*l.* sterling, being the value of one gun and one pistol, being plaintiff's property, which defendant took and converted to his own use. Dated March 30, 1748. Signed by order,

E. Butler, }  
L. Mears, } registrars.

*Dublin MSS.*

<sup>1</sup> A party of Frenchmen came to Galway on an unknown errand, and lay for some time concealed in a convent. They had landed with-

out passports or credentials. Eyre sent for them to come to him. They refused, and he arrested them. The mayor immediately took them out of his hands, and 'in the presence of the prisoners threatened to commit him if he interfered further.' — 'Eyre to Secretary Wayte, August 19, 1755.' *MSS.* Dublin. This, too, was passed over by a Government which desired to believe all to be well, and would therefore notice nothing that was amiss.

which he remembered as a boy flourishing and well attended, came to an end for want of pupils, and a gorgeous mass-house rose where the school had stood. Protestant families, which had been hitherto staunch, forsook a cause which had lost confidence in itself, and conformed to Popery. Eyre forwarded to the Secretary a letter which had reached him unsigned, but for the truth of every word of which he said that he could vouch himself, explaining how in a short time the Protestant interest of Galway, once thought of such importance as to be the subject of a special Act of Parliament, was passing into nothing.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir, I hope you will pardon the trouble I give you when you understand the subject I mean it on. Nor do I know a more proper person, not only from the station her majesty has been pleased to place you in, but from the known adherence you and your family have to the Protestant interest and principles, to which I might speak the fulness of my mind.

'It cannot be strange to you, who from your minority have known this place, how unhappily the poor few Protestants are situated, and dependent on the multitude of their Popish neighbours. And to make our case more miserable, those attempts that have been made to add a little strength to our declining numbers have (as an abandoned people not worth common pity) met with discouragement. Our

neighbours, flushed with success and exulting in the destruction of a hopeful Protestant seminary which promised to be raised among us, are, to our shame be it spoken, erecting a large church in or near the centre of our town, to be illustrated with altar-pieces, music, organs, paintings, &c. What are we to expect as the consequence? Our youths and weak-minded are tempted by the glare and gildings of these structures, and the crafty insinuations of ecclesiastics with which the place abounds; our public worship is neglected, our churches decay, and in their room the others flourish and are supported. From the fulness of my soul I acquaint you with this. I grieve to see the decline of the few poor Protestants that are here, or rather fear an entire extirpation of them.' *MSS.* Dublin.

## SECTION V.

THE Disarming Act partially neutralized the feebleness of the administration; but while wrong was established in the place of right, and while <sup>1747</sup> England was managing Ireland, not for Ireland's good, but for her own imagined interest, no Disarming Act or other superficial remedy could stay the progress of social disease.

The Irish Parliament had struggled long against the advancing tide; but, in the Irish Parliament itself, fatal influences were at work, and a new and poisonous element was beginning to show itself. The decay of religion left the gentry without the restraints which had held their fathers within bounds. The sense of injustice brought with it deserved resentment; but it was a resentment which, avoiding the wholesome roads marked out for it by Swift and Berkeley, took the form of rhetorical declamation. The modern Irish patriot now appeared on the scene; the adventurer, whose trade was agitation, who, careless of Ireland's welfare, made his own way to wealth and distinction by constituting himself the champion of her wrongs.

From the beginning of Anglo-Irish history there can be traced, in the leading spirits of the island, a particular notion of the meaning of the word liberty. True liberty means the being governed by just laws, laws which are in harmony with the will of the Maker



and Master of the world. It is the worst curse of injustice that it leads men to look for redress, not to better government, but to none, and to regard their own consent as the measure of the restraint to which they may rightly be submitted. Liberty, the Irish said, and even Swift lent his authority to the definition, liberty consisted in the being ruled by laws which men made for themselves, tyranny in being ruled by laws made for them by others. If this be true, the minority in every constitutional State lives under a tyranny, for it lives under laws against which it has formally protested. The better the government of a disorderly and licentious people, the greater the wrong that is done to them, because such government most contradicts their own natural tendencies. Yet it is this idea which runs through Irish political discontent, and so long as the consent of the governed is recognized as essential to the legitimacy of authority, so long and so far Ireland will possess a grievance, which only complete separation will remove.

The consent of man was not asked when he was born into the world; his consent will not be asked when his time comes to die. As little has his consent to do with the laws which, while he lives, he is bound to obey. Let a nation be justly governed, and if it is wise it will not quarrel with the destiny which has provided for it the greatest of earthly blessings. English misrule in Ireland reached a point at last at which its grasp relaxed, and weakness compelled a surrender of a power which had been so scandalously

misused: not, however, through any rising virtue on the part of the oppressed Irish, or through any divine aspiration after freedom and self-government, but because wrong had borne its necessary fruit in the feebleness of the oppressor.

As late as Chesterfield's viceroyalty, though legitimate discontent had been often expressed in the House of Commons, there had been little <sup>1749</sup> systematic opposition to the English connexion. In 1703, both Houses passionately desired an act of union, and the storm raised by the halfpence died away when the victory had been won. So long as a combination with the Catholics against English rule was undreamt of, an Irish Protestant patriot was conscious at bottom that he could not maintain himself without England's help. So long as his Protestantism lasted as a real principle, he endured the injuries of his country as a lighter evil than compromise with his old enemy. As the century waned away, community of injury created a sympathy of resentment. The steady increase of Irish misery formed a contrast every year more marked with the growing splendour of England; and if material progress was thenceforward to be the chief aim of humanity, there was no conceivable reason why Ireland, Protestant or Catholic, should be denied a share in it.

In 1747, Lord Harrington having taken the place of Chesterfield, Charles Lucas, a Presbyterian apothecary, commenced the publication of the *Citizen's Journal* in Dublin. The debates in Parliament

were private. It met only in alternate years, and such fragments of speeches alone went abroad as could be carried away by memory. Here, for the first time, the people had an opportunity of seeing their wrongs expressed for them in a clear and permanent form. The paper came out weekly. It contained free criticism on the behaviour of the rich to the poor, the corruption of the courts of justice and the landlords' tyranny. Cases were published of tradesmen being horsewhipped who had dared to ask to have their bills paid. If the tradesman complained, he found the sheriff was the offender's bottle companion; if he went to the judge, he was silenced by higher interest. Similarly townships were shown to have been depopulated by the agents of absentees; constables to have been knocked down in the streets and to have had to bear it, 'for the poor were the great men's slaves.' So far there was no treason. Lucas might have published his journal every day in the year, and in each issue he might have varied his indictment against the state of Irish Society. But from the social wrongs he passed to the national, and denounced, not with the vigour of Swift, but with a noisy eloquence, effective because resting upon truth, the iniquity which had robbed Ireland of her manufactures.

The first number of the paper was dedicated to the King. Lucas appeared at the Castle at a levee, intending, and having allowed his intention to be known—intending to ask Lord Harrington if he had transmitted the dedication to the Court. Harrington sent an

officer to desire him to leave the reception-room. He obeyed, and published in the next issue an account of his treatment. He touched the familiar string which never failed to vibrate—the right of Ireland to make her own laws, and he created such a ferment that, Sir James Sommerville dying, and a vacancy being thus created in the representation of Dublin, Lucas offered himself to the suffrage of the citizens with every chance of success.

Harrington sent copies of the journal to England, to inform the ministers of the storm that was gathering.<sup>1</sup> The Dublin guilds were preparing to present Lucas, as they had presented Swift, with the freedom of their respective corporations.<sup>2</sup> The ‘incendiary,’ so the Viceroy described him, ‘had gained so many converts, that it was absolutely necessary to put a stop to his proceedings.’ Before the writ for the city election could be issued, at the opening of the autumn session for 1749, Lord Harrington denounced him from the throne. The Commons, as yet uninfected with ‘sedition,’ passed a vote that he was an enemy of his country. The mayor and aldermen, whom he had attacked in the interest of the townsmen, declared their abhorrence of him and his paper. A warrant was issued for his apprehension and committal to Newgate; and Lucas, bending before the tempest, left the country and took refuge in the Isle of Man.

<sup>1</sup> They are to be seen in the Record Office, characteristically *uncut*.  
*MSS. Ireland, 1749.*

<sup>2</sup> ‘Lord Harrington to the Duke of Bedford, October 12, 1749.’  
*MSS. Ireland.*

Only, however, for a brief exile. As they grew desperate of other remedies, Irishmen of all ranks began to believe that it would never be well with them till they had the management of their own affairs. Lucas came back soon after, and, in spite of mayor and Castle influence, was returned for Dublin. To misgovern with a high hand was ceasing to be possible; and, as they refused to see and undo the wrong which they had inflicted, the policy of English Cabinets thenceforward was to corrupt where they could no longer defy. Ireland was now to be managed—managed with the abuse of patronage, and, still worse, with the abuse of the Pension List. The landowners who had pocket boroughs were bribed with peerages, and promotions for their children. Popular and needy adventurers sold their country for pensions provided out of the hereditary revenues. The Irish establishment, no more available for royal mistresses and court favourites, was the instrument of the deliberate demoralization of the political intelligence of the nation.

The trade of agitation became, from this time, the surest road to advancement in the service of the State. To oppose the Government, to become troublesome in Parliament, to create a party in the country by denunciation of the hereditary oppressor, and having become dangerous, to betray the wretches who trusted in them, to sell their services for title or promotion, or, grosser still, for bribes or sinecures, for which the means were supplied by the taxes, was the recognized occupation of aspirants to fame and fortune. Their detest-

able calling was pursued by themselves with an effrontery which disdained concealment, and was rewarded by the Government, not always without expressions of disgust, but as, on the whole, the readiest means of keeping quiet a troublesome dependency.

In the absence of the Viceroys the administration was in the hands of the Lords Justices, and, with the administration, the disposition also of patronage and of the public money. There were usually three of these great officers, of whom the Primate was one, the Speaker of the House of Commons another, and the third either the Chancellor, or some influential nobleman. So long as Boulter lived, corruption was rare or unknown.<sup>1</sup> He was upright, honourable, and straightforward, and to the utmost of his ability, which was really considerable, he laboured for the true good of Ireland. He died in 1742. Hoadley succeeded him, but held the Primacy for five years only, and there was then appointed to the first place in the Church of Ireland a prelate of whose virtues (for some virtues it is to be supposed that he possessed) history has preserved no record. George Stone, the son of a banker, the grandson of a gaoler at Winchester, for reasons known to himself or his father, selected the Church as his profession. Made Dean of Derry almost as early as he could hold preferment, he was advanced rapidly through the sees of Ferns and Leighlin, Kildare and

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<sup>1</sup> Boulter was an eminently sincere man, totally free from cant of all kinds. There is scarcely a single sentiment in his most confidential letters, at the publication of which he need have blushed.

Derry, to the archbishopric, which he obtained while still in the vigour of his life. If the qualities which he most exhibited in his high office were those to which he owed his rise, he was lifted forward thus rapidly for his fashionable manners, the profound absence of moral scruple or conscience, and a singular dexterity in handling the political elements of a corrupt and corrupting time. This man was, for many years, the virtual dictator of Ireland. From his handsome person he was called the 'Beauty of Holiness.' Innocent of profligacy in its ordinary forms, he was credited, perhaps unjustly, with abominable vices; but, as foul smells adhere most strongly to unwholesome bodies, the odour, not of sanctity, which enveloped Stone is an evidence that he was an unhealthy representative of the successors of St. Patrick.

The Duke of Dorset, who had once already governed as Viceroy, from 1731 to 1736, returned for another five years in 1751. Growing old, and being perhaps constitutionally indolent, he made his son, Lord George Sackville, Irish secretary; and Lord George and the Primate ruled Ireland with the help of the Pension List.<sup>1</sup> The financial administration had been an exception to the general neglect. The debts contracted in putting the kingdom in a state of defence in 1715 had been largely reduced, and were now under half a million. The revenue exceeded the expenditure. The

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<sup>1</sup> A favourite toast at patriot public dinners in Dublin was, 'May all secretary bashaws and lordly high priests be kept to their tackle, the sword and the Bible; and may the importation of Ganymedes be discouraged in Ireland!' Plowden.

House desired that the surplus should be applied to clearing off the little that remained. The Crown challenged a right to dispose of it without giving account to Parliament; and Stone and Sackville, by free use of these funds among the political leaders, were able for a time to keep the curtain drawn. In the four years of their supremacy they came many times to issue with a powerful Parliamentary minority. Suits continued to be revived by the representatives of forfeited families, whose outlawries, notwithstanding all that had passed, the English Government persisted in taking off. Sir Thomas Prendergast, after fifty-three years' possession of an estate, which had been given to his father by King William, found his right challenged by the O'Shaughnessies. The O'Shaughnessies were supported by subscriptions among the Catholics. Prendergast, threatened with ruinous legal expenses, appealed to the House of Commons; and the Commons, in the teeth of Government influences, decided by a close division, after a violent debate, that 'they would proceed against all persons who assisted the O'Shaughnessies in carrying on their suit, as acting in defiance and contempt of Parliament.'<sup>1</sup> Arthur Neville, the Surveyor-General, a favourite of the Duke of Dorset, and a member of the Lower House, was censured for misappropriation of moneys, and expelled from the Legislature. An enquiry into the Pension List would have followed; but Boyle, the Speaker, who had been the chief promoter of the agitation, had gained the

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, December 11, 1755.



object for which he cared, in compelling the Government to make terms with him. Dorset was recalled as a constitutional concession, and the Primate was dismissed for a time from the Privy Council; but the essential mischiefs continued unabated. The country was plundered further to corrupt those who threatened to expose the corruptions. Boyle was made Earl of Shannon, while lavish pensions rewarded and dispersed his followers.

The game, however, once entered on could not be again abandoned. Honest members were indignant at being so defeated, and were the more resolute to persevere. Dishonest members found the temptation irresistible to follow so lucrative a trade as agitation was seen to be.

Lord Hartington succeeded Dorset in the viceroyalty, but succeeded to an uneasy inheritance. The Commons, at the opening of the next session, expressed their regret that they should have been supposed to desire to encroach on the Royal prerogative. They trusted his majesty would believe that they were seeking only the welfare of their country, and at once the House resolved itself into a committee to consider the heads of a bill to secure the freedom of Parliament, by vacating the seat of any member of the House of Commons who accepted pension or office from the Crown.

The same means were again used which had before been successful. A corrupt majority was secured, and a vote obtained that the committee should suspend its

proceedings.<sup>1</sup> The Commons still demanded an account of the pensions granted in the year preceding, and a list was made out and laid before them, which professed to be complete, amounting to less than 10,000*l.* ;<sup>2</sup> but either the list was falsely drawn, or the most considerable grants were concealed behind some cloak of technicalities. In the next year a resolution was introduced, 'that the pensions and salaries placed on the civil establishment of Ireland since the 23rd of March, 1755, amounted to the annual sum of 28,103*l.* ;<sup>3</sup> amidst reproaches, recriminations, dishonesty, and general discontent, Lord Hartington left Ireland to form an administration with Pitt, and the Duke of Bedford was named to succeed him.

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, March 17, 1756.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* May 5, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> *MSS.* Record Office, Ireland 1757.

## SECTION VI.

FOR a moment, and seemingly by accident, Ireland, at this crisis, attracted the attention of the  
<sup>1757</sup> future Lord Chatham. Ignorant as Pitt evidently was of the condition to which the country was reduced, and strikingly significant as that ignorance was of the neglect with which Irish affairs were treated, the interposition of the last great English minister, brief though it was, shines out amidst the general chicanery and cowardice, as if he belonged to another order of beings. Had the intellect which was to raise England to the first place among the European powers, found leisure to attend more carefully to the poor island, which had been, was, and was to be, England's disgrace and weakness, it was not yet too late to recover the lost ground. It was not too late to restore a nobler spirit into the degraded and degrading administration. The fashion of dissolutions had ceased. The same House, which had been elected at the accession of George the Second, was still sitting after thirty years, renewing its life by elections as seats were vacated by death, and retaining the same disposition and the same traditions. The session of 1757 opened with a renewal of the assault on the Pension List. Resuming the lost bill, but proceeding in another manner, the Patriot party introduced a series of resolutions, that the granting of pensions to persons

not residing in Ireland—the absentee aristocracy who controlled so many borough seats—was a national wrong; that the increase of civil pensions, for many years past, was a grievance which demanded redress; that the granting pensions for a long term of years was an alienation of the revenues of Ireland, an improvident disposition of the revenue, and an injury to the Crown and public. As drunkards themselves petition for a removal of the temptation which destroys them, the members who were themselves the recipients of those dishonouring gratuities, were compelled, by shame and the stream of opinion, to vote with the rest. The resolutions were passed unanimously, and the Viceroy was requested to name a day on which he would receive them, at the hands of the Speaker attended by the entire House.

The Duke of Bedford, a well-meaning but proud and stupid man, accustomed to think of Ireland as a dependency, which had no rights beyond the registering of England's pleasure, was astonished and indignant. He summoned the Council. The resolutions, he said, were derogatory to the King's prerogative, indecent in expression, and so improper that, were he to promise to transmit them to England without expressing his disapproval, he would make himself *participem criminis*. He should, therefore, invite the House to reconsider its action. The Council answered, that the Duke might do as he pleased; the House, however, would not give way; and would resent such a message as an encroachment on its privileges. The Duke took,

therefore, what he called a gentler method. He allowed the Speaker to present the resolutions, which were brought to him, with the solemnities adopted only on the most solemn occasions. 'But the matter which they contained,' he said, 'was of so high a nature that he could not suddenly determine whether it would be proper for him to transmit them or not.'<sup>1</sup>

His 'moderation' 'had not the effect which he expected.' The House refused to enter his answer in the Journals. He appealed to the Speaker, whom he hoped to find as malleable as his predecessors.<sup>2</sup> He received only 'a hard and dry answer that, in a point of this sort, he had no influence ;'<sup>3</sup> and a vote was carried to suspend the supplies till the resolutions were sent over.

The lamentation which Bedford poured out to Pitt was a ludicrous confession of the nature of the influence on which the Castle had allowed itself to depend.

'Revenue officers,' he said, 'officers in the army, even—which is more extraordinary—pensioners who have enjoyed his majesty's bounty, were so disgusted at the like marks of favour which the King has been pleased to bestow on others within these two years past, that they voted to obstruct his majesty's and the public service, till they should have assurance of a satisfactory answer to their injurious demands.'<sup>4</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> 'Bedford to Pitt, November 17.' *MSS.* Record Office, 1757.

<sup>2</sup> John Ponsonby, second son of the first Earl of Bessborough, who had succeeded Boyle, created Earl of Shannon.

<sup>3</sup> Ponsonby was found less hard, as will be seen, at a late period.

<sup>4</sup> 'One person I am ashamed to name,' the Duke goes on, 'as he received but the day before through very ill-judged intercession in his

begged to be recalled, or, if not recalled, to be armed with powers to withdraw the pensions, and to cancel the appointments of the ungrateful recipients of the wages of corruption. By no other means could 'faction be overawed,' and respect recovered to the Government. He recommended a dissolution. No period was affixed by law to the duration of the Irish Parliament. The present House of Commons had been elected on the King's accession, and had every year grown more unmanageable.<sup>1</sup>

Surprised, probably, for the first time, into serious attention to the condition of Ireland, Pitt at once directed that the resolutions should be sent over. 'The worst heat,' he observed, had been provoked by the refusal to lay the grievances of the country before the Crown; the irritation would be allayed, and there would be leisure to consider what else it might be necessary to do if the Duke could be more conciliatory. He desired Bedford's 'own sentiments,' 'the amplest light,' 'a clear and full view,' as a means towards 'some prudent determination.'<sup>2</sup>

Had Pitt been on the spot, he might have done something considerable. Cromwell himself had not a keener loathing for dishonest manoeuvres; and, by aiming at the real evils, he would have rallied the

behalf, a singular mark of his majesty's favour, Colonel Cunningham. He voted for postponing the Money Bill. I thought giving him his rank would confirm him to his majesty's service, and would also have tied the Lord Prizate,

whose creature he is.'—'Bedford to Pitt, November 17, 1757.' *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>1</sup> 'Bedford to Pitt, November 17, 1757.' *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Pitt to Bedford, November, 1757.' *Ibid.*

honest part of the House of Commons, and destroyed faction by removing its excuse. Bedford, trained in official routine, without original insight, and nourished upon constitutional commonplaces, was consciously helpless in an element so new to him. As soon as the embarrassment had reached its height, he was assailed by the leaders of the various factions, who, on their own terms, offered to extricate him. Three-quarters of the House of Commons were virtually nominees of the Peers. They were divided into three parties, of whom the Earl of Kildare, the Primate, and the Speaker were respectively the chiefs. Kildare and Ponsonby were personal enemies, and each was eager to secure some advantage at the other's expense. The Primate, who resented his removal from the Council, was willing to forgive, if restored to a share of patronage and power. He had friends in the English Cabinet who furnished him with copies of Pitt's most secret despatches, and thus negotiated for himself at special advantage. The Duke could not bring himself to the humiliation of listening at once to either of these competitors. The point of the resolutions being conceded, supplies were voted. Parliament separated for the Christmas recess, and the Viceroy was able to compose himself to send Pitt the information which was desired. The problem, as it presented itself to Bedford, was not how to govern Ireland wisely and well, but rather 'how to preserve it in the proper subserviency which it owed to the mother-country'—an object in itself legitimate and essential, yet impossible to be obtained

till the mother-country recognized the conditions under which she had rights over Ireland at all.

‘Faction and party,’ the Duke said, ‘have spread through all orders of men. There are not twenty in the House of Commons, including the servants of the Crown, on whom I can depend, or who are not more attached to some particular interest than the service of the Crown. Two parties have taken in hand to distress the Government, or force themselves into it; while the other party, which alone can check them, will not risk its popularity unless I consent to throw all power into the hands of its leaders. One of the two parties is the Primate’s, which, by unnatural conjunction with that of the Speaker, in opposition to the administration of the late Lord-Lieutenant, is equal, if not superior, in numbers to the Earl of Kildare’s. I might have looked for help from the latter; but many of them are so infatuated with a vain popularity, and as vain a notion of securing their elections at a future Parliament, that I cannot depend on their assistance in opposing questions that may be proposed by their most bitter enemies. This is true; and the remedy is, that when I go to England I leave the sword in the hands of a deputy in whom I can confide—one who, by birth and attachment, shall be free from all Irish connexions. You cannot make a regency out of the heads of these factions, who would be equal in power, and equally solicitous of obtaining favour for those of their connexions. Should two join against the third, what mischief might we not look for? I



adhere to my system. This kingdom ought not to be governed by parties. How long it has been so, and the ill effects arising from it, all the world knows too well. Any point touching on the English prerogatives is eagerly caught at. They talk of taxes on absentees or pensioners, &c. It may be necessary to dissolve them; or prorogation may bring them to a better mind. Strong measures, however, lie visibly ahead.’<sup>1</sup>

Strong measures—but what or how? No one knew better than Pitt that the sword, unless so tempered as to heal the wounds which it inflicts, exasperates the symptoms which it is employed to cure.

‘The Duke,’ he replied, ‘might have been more particular in explaining why parties in Ireland could not combine in measures for Ireland’s good.’ The plan of leaving the power to Lords Justices ‘free from Irish connexions,’ ‘might deserve consideration in a subsidiary, conciliable, and healing disposition of spirits.’ ‘In a temper of national resentment and growing exasperation,’ it might only increase the mischief. Dissolution or prorogation he thought ‘wholly unadvisable and dangerous.’<sup>2</sup>

That Bedford should go to England, and see Pitt in private, was made necessary by a betrayal of their correspondence on both sides of the water. The Viceroy’s letters were the property of the political leaders within a few hours of their being written. Each

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Bedford to Pitt (abridged), January 4, 1758.’ *MSS.* Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Pitt to Bedford, February 2, 1758.’ *Ibid.*

of them knew his embarrassments. Each feared to be left at the mercy of his rivals, and all alike to have the spoils of office stolen from them, by the appointment as deputy of some impartial Englishman.

The money having been voted for the usual two years, the concluding weeks of the session of 1758 were smoothed by mutual compromises. The struggle was suspended till Parliament should again meet, while the Viceroy worked in private to make a temporary arrangement during his absence. The first plan was to combine all parties, and leave three lords justices. The Primate offered to serve with Kildare and Ponsonby. But Kildare declined. 'The hate of parties to each other in public affairs,' wrote Bedford, '*for in private I see less of it than in most other countries,*' is 'so great, that I cannot conciliate them; and to leave the sword to either would be fatal.'<sup>1</sup> Kildare, however, was not the only powerful nobleman in Ireland. The Primate and Ponsonby were willing to work together. Lord Shannon, having won his earldom and his pension, was not unwilling to earn future favours. In a letter, 'most secret and particular,' the Duke informed Pitt that he had at last formed a combination which would answer during a short absence. The Primate promised to be faithful in future, if his late conduct was not remembered against him. The Viceroy undertook, in return, that he should have his share in public patronage.<sup>2</sup> The sore question of the Pension List was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Bedford to Pitt, February 9.' MSS. Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Bedford to Pitt, February 10, 1758.' Ibid.

allowed to lie over for the present, and Bedford sailed 'in the yacht' for England, at the beginning of May.

The curtain rises again in the autumn of 1759. A matter had occurred meanwhile which, if in 1759 Ireland it created no astonishment, was regarded in England with indignant surprise. The Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Antony Malone, and Mr. Clements, one of the Tellers, both members of the Privy Council, established a private bank in Dublin, fell into difficulties, and created a confusion in the public accounts. That they had traded with the public money they loudly denied; and their delinquency, if it had extended so far, was condoned by the Irish Parliament.<sup>1</sup> By their own confession, however, vast sums of money, public or private, or both together, had passed through their hands. They had paid off the mortgages on their estates, and had largely added to them. They failed to meet their engagements, and were forced to suspend payment; and though their debts were ultimately cleared, and Irish sentiment dealt with them leniently, the opinion in London was severely unfavourable.

By this time to private scandal and Parliamentary faction there was added a public danger. The French war was at its height, and it was expected that a blow was to be aimed at England through the vulnerable side. A squadron of five ships, under M. Thurot, sailed from Dunkirk in October, to cruise in the Irish seas, while a powerful fleet collected at Brest—which,

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<sup>1</sup> 33 George II. cap. 4.

rumour said, was to land an army in Munster, in the middle of the winter. The relations between France and Ireland were manifold and intimate. The smuggling commerce was enormous; the Irish brigade corresponded regularly with their families at home. Officers had passed to and fro in disguise; and the air was full, as usual, of rumours of insurrection. Fifty thousand Catholics were reported ready to rise in arms to meet their deliverers, and their disposition to rebel was believed in Paris to be a practical fact.

Many anxious conversations on the state of Ireland had passed meanwhile between Pitt and Bedford. The Duke had told Pitt, that, 'after eight months' experience, he considered Ireland as a country where laws had lost all energy, magistracy all authority, and even Parliament itself all reverence; and that nothing but military force could restrain the subject within due obedience.'<sup>1</sup>

Pitt's replies are unrecorded. Obviously, however, from his subsequent language, it was to the Protestants and to Protestantism that he looked for recuperative force there, not to any relaxation of Catholic disabilities; that he regarded the discontent of Protestants in the midst of a hostile population as too strange a phenomenon to be accounted for by mere factiousness. For the moment the war was all-absorbing. Early in the autumn Bedford returned to Dublin. The French were daily looked for. The army was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Bedford to Pitt, reminding him of a conversation in the spring. December 25, 1759.'

concentrated at Clonmel, ready to turn in whatever direction the enemy might appear. Limerick was the point of danger. If the landing was at Limerick, the city, it was thought, could not be saved. There was no force available but the regular troops. In 1715, every able-bodied Protestant had pressed into the militia, and the whole country was an armed camp. In 1759, the city of London alone raised a larger force than the whole of Ireland. The lords and gentlemen had been profuse in professions and promises; 'but the inefficacy of their zeal, their supineness after so strong and frequent warnings of dangers, could not but,' to Pitt's troubled mind, 'administer just ground of wonder and alarm.'<sup>1</sup>

The spirit of the seventeenth century was dead. Protestantism had spent its force, or survived only among the Presbyterians, whose bitterness over their prolonged disabilities was stronger than their loyalty. Public spirit, pride in the glorious empire of which they were permitted to be a part, had no longer an existence in the minds of the Irish colonists; or, if they recognized that they possessed a country, it was 'to thank God that they had a country to sell.'

English courage arrested the invasion. The French fleet, after sailing from Brest, was met by Hawke at Belleisle, and smashed in pieces. Thurot and his squadron descended on Carrickfergus, took the castle, plundered the town, and threatened Belfast. Had

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pitt to Bedford, November 2, 1759.' MSS. Record Office.

Belfast been attacked it could not have been saved, 'not so much as a single firelock,' so Pitt wrote indignantly, 'having been put into the hands of any Protestant in that part of Ireland since the commencement of the war;' <sup>1</sup> and Belfast was the only town in Ireland, except Dublin, of which the pillage would have been worth the risk of the adventure. Happily, before Thurot had time to learn with what ease he might make the capture, the English were upon him. Three frigates lay in harbour at Kinsale, the 'Æolus,' the 'Pallas,' and the 'Brilliant,' Captain Elliott, in the 'Æolus,' commanding. Thurot's five ships had been reduced to three also, of almost equal force with Elliott's. Already, before the attack on Carrickfergus, they had been heard of on the coast, and the English squadron was on its way to look for them.

Thurot was found still at anchor in Carrickfergus Bay. The wind was blowing hard off shore. The English could not close; and, under cover <sup>1760</sup> of night, Thurot slipped out into the channel. But Elliott was after him with daylight, and came up with him on the morning of the 28th February, between the Mull of Galloway and the Isle of Man. After a sharp engagement of an hour and a half, in which the French admiral was killed, the three ships struck, and were towed as prizes into Ramsay harbour, and the French descent on Ireland was at an end. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pitt to Bedford, March 13, 1760.' MSS. Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> 'Captain Elliott to the Duke of Bedford February 24, and 29, 1760.' Ibid.

The Dublin populace, meanwhile, had taken the opportunity of displaying the change of temper which had come over them since 1703, when Ireland, almost on her knees, had petitioned for incorporation in the empire. Provoked, perhaps, by a knowledge of Bedford's words to Pitt, that Ireland could only be controlled by military force, a rumour had gone abroad that the Parliament was about to be suppressed; that the country was to be governed as a province from London, and the taxes to be voted at St. Stephen's.

Every day, after the opening of the Autumn session of 1759, a disorderly crowd hung about the doors of the Parliament House. Unpopular members were hooted at and hustled, and the city authorities had been required, with very little effect, to keep order. There was an adjournment for a few days in November. On the day of the reassembling,<sup>1</sup> a mob of several thousand persons, armed with swords and bludgeons, collected in College Green, broke into the House of Lords, and placed an old woman with a pipe in her mouth on the throne, as an indication of their respect for the Viceroy. They then took possession of the doors and approaches, and every member, Peer or Commoner, as he came up, was made to swear to be true to Ireland before he was allowed to enter. The Chancellor, Lord Bowes, an Englishman, refused the oath, and was turned back. The disturbance lasted through the whole morning. The Mayor came down, but looked on complacently, and refused to interfere.

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<sup>1</sup> December 3.

In the afternoon Bedford sent for him and the Sheriffs, bade them swear in special constables instantly, and quell the riot. The Mayor, from 'ill-judged popularity,' said he did not know on whom he could depend. Bedford offered him the support of the troops. The Mayor replied that, as there was no Riot Act in Ireland, he could not sanction the use of the troops. He had urged the people to disperse, and he hoped they would obey. He would not order them to be shot 'in an affair about the privileges of Parliament.'

The city was thus left at the mercy of armed ruffians. Fifty soldiers were marched into the streets, as a demonstration; but, as no one would give them orders to act, they were only laughed at. At last, the Duke took the responsibility on himself. A party of cavalry were sent out, with directions in writing, to disperse the crowd, using as little violence as possible, but still to disperse them. The rioters retreated into the side streets, and defended themselves with stones; but finding this time that authority meant to assert itself, and that they were ridden down and sabred, they stood their ground till sixteen of them had been killed, and then disappeared into their dens.

In the riot itself, though no such scenes had been witnessed in Dublin for forty years, there was nothing calculated to create serious apprehension. It was the conduct of the civil authorities which gave it exceptional importance; which led Pitt, when he heard of what had happened, to reflect seriously,



perhaps for the first time, on the Irish problem ; and gave occasion for a curious and extremely valuable interchange of letters with the Duke of Bedford. The disturbance originated in a part of Dublin called 'the Earl of Meath's Liberty,' inhabited almost exclusively by Protestant artisans, among whom some excitement had been created two years before by a visit from John Wesley. Methodism, since Wesley's preaching, had more or less agitated the lower classes of the Dublin Protestants ; and, as a new form of dissent, had given special annoyance to the official mind of the Viceroy.

Interpreting the feelings of the Dublin populace by his own, and especially indignant at the indifference with which the banking transactions of the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer had been passed over, Mr. Pitt considered the uproar to have been probably a demonstration against Mr. Malone and Mr. Clements. Bedford still persisted in throwing a shield over the delinquents, and, with the contempt of an English aristocrat for the opinions of a mob, set it down to the dissolution of authority and the republican tenets of the new sect, which he stigmatized with the name of Swaddlers. He shrunk from ordering an enquiry into the Mayor's conduct, and was disposed to transfer the entire responsibility to the Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The place in which the riot rose, the Earl of Meath's Liberty, is chiefly inhabited by weavers, many of whom are Protestants, and of those called the "New Light Pres- byterians, or Swaddlers." Their tenets, both here and, I am sorry to say, in the North of Ireland, are totally Republican, and averse to English Government, and therefore

Through the mists and clouds of Irish misgovernment, Pitt's answer shines out like an exceptional flash of sunlight. Though he had no leisure to master the intricacies of the past administrative blundering, his powerful sense grasped instinctively the only principles on which order and good government could be restored. In the persevering efforts to screen a real enormity, he saw how deep was the root of the disease, and in the Duke's poor efforts to throw the blame on the Dissenters, an evidence of the miserable infatuation which had so long paralyzed the influence of Protestantism. When Wesley visited Ireland in 1747, the peasantry had flocked about him as eagerly as the miners of Wales and Cornwall, and had been only driven from him by terror of their priests. Of all forms of the Protestant religion, Methodism and Calvinism were best fitted to make converts among the warm impassioned Celts. The Irish Government, with insane ingenuity, at once made itself the protector of moral dishonesty, and selected for special enmity England's most effective allies.

'You remind me,' so Pitt replied (and the letter should have been engraved on the walls of the vice-regal cabinet, for successive governors of Ireland to read their duty there)—'You remind me that you told me last spring, that you considered Ireland, after eight months' experience, as a country where law had lost

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they are at least, equally with the Catholics, to be guarded against.'—  
 'Bedford to Pitt, December 25, 1759.' MSS. Record Office, Ireland.

energy, magistracy all authority, and that nothing but military force could restrain the subject within due obedience.

‘I must remind you in turn, that the great danger stated by your Grace, to be apprehended for Ireland, turned principally, if not solely, on the excessive superiority in numbers of Papists over Protestants.

‘For the Lord Mayor and magistrates of Dublin, I can only observe that, in the late atrocious riot, those magistrates may more properly be said to have totally lost all sense of fidelity and duty, than that law and magistracy have lost energy and authority—a timely execution whereof so prudently and so expressly recommended by your Grace, duly supported in the execution by the military force, could not possibly have failed to prevent the consummation of so opprobrious an indignity to Government, as well as to have seized and brought to exemplary punishment the ringleaders in such a daring attempt.

‘I am hereupon to acquaint your Grace, that this wilful and shameful in exertion of magistracy continues to be considered here as being highly proper to be taken up and enquired into by the executive power, the exoneration whereof from itself by recommending the same to the inquisition of the House of Commons in Ireland, might tend to a further relaxation of the authority of the King’s government by due course of law.

‘In case, on such enquiry being had, there shall appear full and sufficient grounds in law to prosecute

criminally and convict the said magistrates, it is his majesty's pleasure that your Grace, after taking the advice of his servants learned in the law, should order proper legal proceedings to be commenced against them.

‘With regard to the causes of the late outrage, I cannot but remark that, considering the riot to have taken its rise in the Earl of Meath's Liberty, chiefly inhabited by Protestant weavers, there is still more pregnant ground to apprehend that the money transactions of Mr. Malone and Mr. Clements have probably been one fatal ingredient amongst others, observed by your Grace, towards distempering and revolting the minds of a manufacturing multitude, who (though nothing can extenuate the guilt of such an insurrection) may perhaps have felt in their trade the consequences of such a scandalous and iniquitous business, which continues here to be viewed in the same light, and to stand the object of public animadversion.

‘It is with great concern I observe, your Grace thinks there is cause to consider any one class of Presbyterians in Ireland as averse to English government, and therefore at least, equally with Papists, to be guarded against. I am not very particularly acquainted with the distinctive tenets of the sect among them mentioned by your Grace, but it highly imports Government to reflect—however blameworthy the too rigid adherence of Presbyterians to some things may justly be thought in comparison to the excellences of

the Church of England—that nevertheless the Presbyterian Dissenters in general must ever deserve to be considered, in opposition to the Church of Rome, as a very valuable branch of the Reformation; and that, with regard to their civil principles, that respectable body have in all times showed themselves, both in England and Ireland, firm and zealous supporters of the glorious revolution under King William, and of the present happy Establishment.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Pitt to Bedford, January 5, 1760.’ MSS. Record Office.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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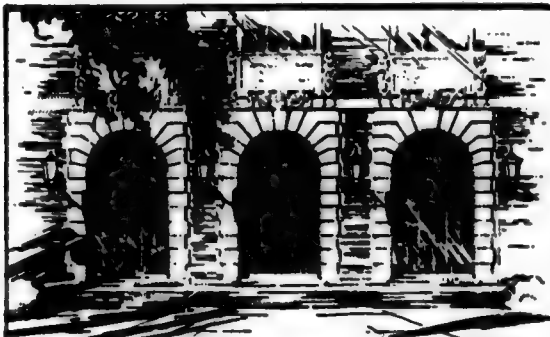
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Richard Mitchell

**THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND.**

**VOLUME II.**

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

# THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND

IN THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A.

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*IN THREE VOLUMES*

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## BOOK V.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE REVIVAL OF THE CELTS.

##### SECTION I.

**A** FREE government depends for its successful working on the loyal co-operation of the people. Where the people do not co-operate, the forms of liberty are either a mockery, or an instrument of disunion and anarchy. Had the Irish been regarded from the outset as a conquered people whom a stronger neighbour had forced, for its own convenience, into reluctant submission, Ireland would have escaped the worst of her calamities. Her clans would have been held in awe by an army; public order would have been preserved by a police: but her lands would have been left to their native owners; her customs and her laws might have been untouched, and her religion need not have been interfered with. The nature of the English constitution forbade an experiment which might have been dangerous to our own liberties. Ireland was in fact a foreign country; we preferred to assume that she was an integral part of the empire. We imposed upon her our own



modes of self-government; we gave her a parliament, we gave her our trial by jury and our common law; we assimilated the Irish Church to our own; and these magnificent institutions refused to root themselves in an uncongenial soil. The Parliament was forbidden to legislate till its decisions had been shaped for it beforehand. The rule of feudal tenure inflicted forfeiture on rebellion; the native owners were therefore dispossessed for asserting the liberties of their country; and their estates were bestowed upon aliens. The Irish preferred their own laws to ours. They became in consequence Irish enemies' and outlaws, and might be wronged and killed with impunity. When we forced them at last to submit to our laws, trial by jury made the execution of those laws impossible; and with equal impunity the colonists could then be murdered, their cattle houghed, and their daughters ravished by the natives. The Church being an estate of the realm and a governing section of the constitution, the Church in the two countries had to be shaped on the same pattern. At the conquest we forced the Irish Church into submission to the Papacy. At the Reformation we forced it to apostatise. As the Reformation pursued its course, the theory of our Church Establishment split the garrison of Protestants, whom we had planted in the island, into hostile camps. A free representative legislature which yet was not free and was not representative—a gentry who could not rule—a Church which could not teach—laws which could not be enforced—these were the consequences which resulted from the preference of

unreality to fact. They might all have been avoided had the truth been acknowledged and acted on; but England was unable to recognize that constitutional liberty in our country might be constitutional slavery in another.

If the object was to absorb and extinguish the spirit of Irish nationality, it signally failed of success. Had the union been conceded for which the presentiments of the Irish Parliament led them to petition in 1704; had trade and manufactures been allowed to develop, and the stream of British Protestant emigration been directed continuously into all parts of the island, the native population might have been overborne or driven out, and the mother country might have retained the affections of a people with whom she would then have been identified in interest and sentiment. By a contemptible jealousy she flung them back upon themselves, a minority amidst a hostile population, and condemned them to idleness and impoverishment; she left them to add their own grievances to the accumulated wrongs of the entire country; while she left them at the same time their own Parliament, in which the national discontent could find a voice; and taught them to look for allies among her own enemies.

The Protestant revolt will form the subject of the present volume. It was an act of madness—madness in the colony which revolted—madness in the mother country which provoked the quarrel. The colonists were an army of occupation amidst a spoliated nation who were sullenly brooding over their wrongs. By

England's help alone they could hope to retain their ascendancy. It was England's highest interest to keep the garrison strong, if she was to escape a recurrence of the dangers which had already cost her so dear. The colonists in their own vanity and exasperation forgot or despised the peril from a race whom they regarded as slaves. England, half conscious of an injustice which she was too proud or too negligent to redress, attempted to hold the colony in check by patronizing and elevating the Catholic Celts. Before the story can proceed, the events mentioned at the close of the last chapter require to be described more particularly.

Poisonous as were the laws in restraint of trade, unequal as was the executive government to the repression of the most vulgar crimes, the administration of Ireland possessed a single merit. If it did nothing, it cost little. The taxation was light, and the finances, notwithstanding the infamy of the Pension List, were economically managed. At the middle of the century the annual revenue averaged eight hundred thousand pounds. Of the entire sum, the fixed excise and customs duties, the quit rents, and the hearth money which had been settled upon the Crown, and were beyond control of Parliament, produced three quarters, which were supplemented by a biennial grant. A debt of a million incurred in the Spanish succession war was reduced on the re-establishment of peace. In 1749 the income exceeded the expenditure, and it was agreed on all hands that the surplus should be appropriated to the discharge of the little that remained. On the principle

there was no difference. But whether the Irish House of Commons was to have the honour of suggesting the appropriation in compliance with their asserted privilege of originating their own money bills, or whether it was to be recommended from England, according to the English construction of Poynings' Act, which forbade the introduction of bills into the Irish Parliament that had not been first submitted to the English Council, became a burning question. The self-respect of Ireland was held to depend on the right solution of it, and the two countries flung themselves into the struggle with a passion of political desperation during three biennial sessions. In 1749, in 1751, and in 1753 the Viceroy informed the Commons in the speech from the throne that his majesty would recommend the application of the surplus to the payment of debt. The Commons took no notice of the recommendation, drew the heads of their bills on their own initiation, and forwarded them to England. In England the heads were altered by the Council, and the King's previous consent was re-introduced. Twice the Irish Parliament submitted with murmurs. In 1753, under the viceroyalty of the Duke of Dorset, they threw out the <sup>1753</sup> altered bill by a majority of five. The additional duties were refused and the business of the country was brought to a standstill.

A majority in the House of Commons was at this time returned by four great families. The Fitzgeralds of Kildare, the Boyles, the Ponsonbys, and the Beresfords, by their county influence and their private

boroughs, were the political sovereigns of Ireland. The government was carried on by their assistance, and they received in return the patronage of the State. The Viceroy understood the meaning of the vote. The great houses were affecting patriotism for objects of their own, and he found it necessary to capitulate. The terms were privately arranged; Boyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons, was made Earl of Shannon, with a pension of 2000*l.* a year. John Ponsonby succeeded Boyle as Speaker. The patriot orators were silenced by promotions. Anthony Malone became Chancellor of the Exchequer; Stannard, Recorder of Dublin, another eloquent exponent of the wrongs of Ireland, was made Prime Sergeant. The opposition to England's initiation of money bills was suspended till the great families were again hungry, and fresh expectants of promotion were in a position to be troublesome.

The Parliament determined with the Sovereign. On the death of George the Second the House, which had been elected at his accession, came to its mature end, and in October, 1761, the first session was to open of the new representation.

Anticipating a demand for a fine on the renewal of the lease, and resolved to resist at the outset the patriotic affectations which were used as a pretext for agitation, the English Council inserted in the first bill, which was sent over to be laid before the new Parliament, a clause for the application of a sum of money. The Earl of Halifax, who was now viceroy, was deafened with the clamours of the Irish servants of the Crown,

and doubted the wisdom of his chiefs. The supporters of Government threatened apostasy. The ministers, Halifax thought, might be right in the abstract, but they were pressing an invidious claim in the face of a notorious prejudice. The supplies might be again challenged, and at the opening of a new reign it might be unwise to commence with a quarrel.<sup>1</sup> The Secretary of State<sup>2</sup> gave the Viceroy to understand that the insertion of the clause had been made deliberately, and was to be insisted on. The right of Great Britain was indubitable. The assertion of it was considered indispensably necessary to the King's honour and the vindication of the prerogative. The bill must be laid before Parliament in the form in which it had been sent over. If it failed, Halifax would not be held responsible.<sup>3</sup>

The storm which Halifax anticipated would have certainly risen but for peculiar conditions under which the new members had been returned. The corruption with which the Government had secured a majority on the appropriation of the surplus had suggested to the constituencies that they might themselves obtain a share in the plunder. Seats in Parliament had been hitherto virtually for life. More frequent elections would compel the representatives to divide their spoils with their supporters. At the elections, to their general surprise, the candidates had been called on for a promise to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Halifax to the Earl of Egremont, October 11, 1761.' S. P. O. | who took office with Newcastle in 1761.

<sup>2</sup> Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, | <sup>3</sup> 'Egremont to Halifax, October 20.' S. P. O.

support a Septennial Act; pledges to that effect having been especially exacted from the servants of the Crown as the price of their return.<sup>1</sup>

Embarrassed with the prospect of a change which they secretly disliked, while they were themselves afraid to oppose it, to the surprise of Halifax they declined the challenge on the money bill. They passed the supplies by a large majority. They ventured a resolution that the Pension List had been increased without sufficient reason,<sup>2</sup> and seemed to threaten an attack upon it. The Viceroy lectured the Lords Justices. Egremont wrote that the King was amazed and offended at so extraordinary a demonstration, and insisted that there should be no repetition of it.<sup>3</sup> The excitement was unnecessary; the real attention of the Commons was absorbed in the Septennial Bill. Dr. Lucas, the patriot member for Dublin, introduced the heads at the opening of the session. In December, when the Pension storm had abated, the subject came forward for discussion. Halifax had received no instructions. He expressed no opinion and offered no opposition. If the ministry considered the measure objectionable, he said he could stop it in Council, but he was evidently uncertain in what light it would be regarded.

Could the Commons have been assured that the bill would be rejected in England they would have passed

<sup>1</sup> 'Halifax to Egremont, October 1761, and December 4, 1761.'

64,127*l.* in 1761. *Commons' Journals, Ireland, 1761.*

<sup>2</sup> The Civil Pension List had grown from 54,497*l.* in 1759, to

<sup>3</sup> 'Halifax and Egremont Correspondence, November 1761.' S.P.O.

it with acclamations. The neutral attitude of the Viceroy alarmed them. They were afraid to turn it out. They were afraid that if sent over it might be returned unopposed. They escaped from the difficulty by attaching to it a property qualification as a condition of eligibility so heavy, that so encumbered the most ardent patriot could only desire that the bill might fail.<sup>1</sup> It was presented to the Viceroy, but without the forms which were observed usually with popular measures. When the House desired to signify a special desire that a bill should be returned to them, the heads were carried to the Castle by the Speaker, attended by the entire body of members. A motion that the heads of the Septennial Act should be so presented was defeated by a majority of two to one, and no sooner had a private member placed the heads in Halifax's hands, than its authors manœuvred to stop the bill in the Irish Council. Halifax reported that the change was 'uniformly disliked by the most unprejudiced people of rank, influence, and fortune.' 'They were alarmed by secret, and, as they thought, authentic information, that if transmitted it would certainly be returned to them ;'<sup>2</sup> and Shannon, Ponsonby, and the other prominent members of the Council of State, requested an assurance that their alarms were unfounded before they would consent to let it go.

. The ministry, playing with their fears, replied that

<sup>1</sup> For a county seat the qualification was to be an estate of 600*l.* a year, for a borough seat 300*l.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Halifax to Egremont, December 11 and December 23, 1761.' S. P. O.



the King could make no engagements beforehand. The Dublin merchants held a meeting to protest against 'the clandestine arts' by which an important reform was obstructed. The heads were at last transmitted, passing the Council only, however, by a majority of one. 'The popularity of the Bill has diminished,' wrote Halifax, 'as the probability of its being carried into law has increased. Nobody wishes for it. It is unacceptable to those who seemed most sanguine in its favour. Unanimous as they were at first, they will now throw it out rather than pass it.' With a curious consciousness that if the Irish Parliament became a reality it would cease to exist, the patriot members began to fear that the agitation had been set on foot by English treachery, 'as a preliminary step towards a Union.'<sup>1</sup>

They might have spared their terrors. Either by design or accident, the draftsman had added a condition which made the bill into an absurdity, and relieved the government of the necessity of bestowing the most transient consideration on the subject. The heads of the Septennial Act were submitted as usual to the English law officers of the Crown. They returned it to the Lords of the Council with the following report:—

'We have examined the Act for limiting the duration of Parliament transmitted from Ireland. So much thereof as limits the duration to a term of seven years, imports a most essential alteration in the constitution

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<sup>1</sup> 'Halifax to Egremont, February 18, 1762.'

of Ireland. The fitness or unfitness of this provision is a matter of State of so high a nature that we submit the same entirely to the wisdom of your lordships.

‘For the qualification of members we doubt how far such provisions are expedient for Ireland—whether the qualification be not too high, and the exceptions too few.

‘An amendment, however, is absolutely necessary. No member is to sit, according to the Act, till his qualification is proved, while a full House is sitting, with the Speaker in the chair. The law, therefore, can never be executed, nor any business at all, because no Speaker can be chosen before the members have a right to vote; and no member can exercise his right of voting till such Speaker is chosen.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Report of the Attorney- and a Committee of the Privy Council  
Solicitor-General of England to Appointed to Consider the Irish  
the Right Honourable the Lords of Bills. March 5, 1762.’ S. P. O.

## SECTION II.

THE penal laws had failed to coerce the Catholics into conformity. The Charter schools had failed to convert them. The penal laws had failed because the English Government had interposed to protect the Catholic clergy. The Charter schools had failed, having been choked in Irish society, as wholesome vegetables are choked in a garden when the weeds are allowed scope to spring.<sup>1</sup> Celtic Ireland was reviving from the stupor into which she had been thrown by the Revolution. Exclusion from the land had driven the more energetic of the Catholics into trade. Protestants who had to seek their fortunes had gone to countries where they were more fairly dealt with, and had left the field open. A commercial Catholic population, ambitious and wealthy, was springing up in Dublin, Limerick, and Cork; and a time was visibly

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<sup>1</sup> Within a few years of their establishment the Charter schools had ceased to grow. Private benefactions fell off; and though Parliament made no difficulty in voting money, the annual grants were swallowed up by peculation. The industrial training, so excellent in conception, degenerated by negligence into a system in which the children became the slaves of the masters, and grew up in rags and starvation. As the numbers fell off, infant nurseries were established, the society observing that parents were more willing to part with their children when very young. These nurseries, from a report of one of the managers to the House of Commons, appear at last to have been merely foundling asylums, twenty infants having been found at one of them 'exposed among the carpenters' shavings. *Commons' Journals*, November 10, 1761.

approaching when their relations to the soil would have to be reconsidered. Liberal English politicians were always looking to the Catholics as a convenient counterpoise to the Protestant colonists, whom ill-usage was exasperating into disaffection. A section of the Catholics, in return—the educated men of business, the more temperate of the bishops, the noblemen of Norman-English blood, the Fingals, the Kenmares, the Trimlestons, who had preserved their estates and were allowed their titles by courtesy—were willing enough to meet advances to them with cordiality and gratitude.

By the side of these, within the same communion, were the irreconcilable spirits who inherited the past traditions—the representatives of the dispossessed chiefs—who nursed in secret their unappeased resentment, and revenged their wrongs when opportunity offered, as ravishers of women, cattle-houghers, incendiaries, and agrarian assassins. To them England was the cause of all the woes which they suffered, and was and should be to the end a loathed and execrated enemy. They were themselves the descendants of the men who had fought at Aghrim, and been cheated at Limerick. In the French brigade they had still an army on the Continent, which they recruited annually from their own ranks, and to which they looked as their future avenger.

The first section accepted their situation, and made the best of it. The second brooded over their wrongs, and fed themselves with dreams of vengeance. Both, perhaps, were at bottom of the same nature, and were

working towards the same end; but their outward attitude was markedly different. The English Government, accepting the distinction as real, made it the basis of its Irish policy, and the rule of the Castle statesmanship was to conciliate the more reputable Catholics, and to assume that the Catholic creed, as such, no longer forbade or interfered with allegiance to a Protestant sovereign. The first open sign of the approaching change was in the viceroyalty of the Duke of Bedford, who, while in office in 1757, spoke in terms so unambiguous of a relaxation of the penal laws, that public thanks were bestowed on him from the altars of the Catholic chapels. It might have been well to relax the penal laws had the causes for which they were imposed been clearly asserted and admitted. Unhappily the desire of conciliation was pressed so far as to disfigure and conceal the facts of history. An annual sermon, preached before the House of Commons on the 23rd of October, was designed to keep alive the memory of the rebellion and massacres of 1641. Dr. Curry, a Catholic physician of eminence, ventured boldly on the same ground. In a memoir of the period he revived the plea which was alleged to Charles the Second in bar of the Act of Settlement, that the rebellion was no rebellion, but the innocent and cruelly misrepresented effort of a loyal people to defend the Crown against Puritan usurpation; that half of the alleged cruelties were the invention of fanatical bigots; that the rest were enormously exaggerated; and that so far as blood had been shed at all, it was only in self-defence against

a deliberate design to exterminate the Catholic population.

Dr. Curry's story will not bear examination, but it was well contrived to fall in with the growing sentiment that the past had better be forgotten; and thus a legend was allowed to re-establish itself unproved, which teaches the Irish Catholics to regard themselves as victims of an atrocious conspiracy—a conspiracy to rob them of their lands, and to justify it by blackening their reputation.

Bedford proposed to repeal the bill against the clergy, and to allow an adequate supply of priests, ordained abroad, to be systematically introduced and registered. The Catholics declined an offer which, in legalising the presence of their clergy, would have deprived them of their bishops;<sup>1</sup> but they were too shrewd to refuse to recognize the good intentions of the Government, and they made haste to display in other ways their willingness to meet them. The splendid triumphs of Chatham's foreign policy—the conquest of

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<sup>1</sup> It seems, from a letter of Dr. O'Connor to Dr. Curry, that the offer was not refused without hesitation. 'They offer us a Registry Bill,' he writes, 'which is calculated to extirpate our very remains. Nothing can be better known than that our spiritual economy cannot be exercised without the spiritual jurisdiction of our bishops. Yet the jurisdiction of Catholic bishops is totally overturned by this blessed boon which is to destroy Popery by

Popery itself. . . I see now there is no remedy but emigration. I can never think of this legal annihilation of episcopal authority without alternate emotions of anger and dejection. I am told that after this Bill passes, the penal clauses shall be as little enforced as those already existing. Vain presumption! This penal law is calculated to execute itself; and ourselves shall be the executioners.'—*Plowden, Appendix, No. 61.*

India, the expulsion of the French from the Canadas, and the victories of the English everywhere, as unexpected as they were brilliant, provoked Louis XV. to aim a blow in return at England's vulnerable side. The officers of the Irish brigade held out the usual hope that an invasion of Munster would be followed by a rising of the people. The intention becoming known, the Dublin Catholics came forward with a demonstration of loyalty. Under Dr. Curry's guidance a declaration of allegiance, signed by three hundred Catholic merchants, was presented to the Viceroy, received graciously, and published in the *Gazette*. The supineness of the Protestants played into their hands. The French fleet sailed. It was destroyed by Hawke at Belleisle,<sup>1</sup> and the opportunity of proving the sincerity of their professions was not afforded them; but their outward conduct contrasted not a little to their advantage with the languor of the Lords and Commons and the Irish Executive.

The Catholics, though disarmed, were at least outwardly zealous. The colonists were snarling over the initiation of money bills, or dishonestly manœuvring with Septennial Acts. Dr. Curry pursued his advantage. He established a permanent committee in Dublin to watch over Catholic interests in communication with the Government. For some unexplained reason, Spanish influence was thought more powerful for evil in Ireland than the French, and when, in 1761,  
1761. Spain was added to the number of England's

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<sup>1</sup> November 20, 1759.

enemies, the committee thought the time was come to sue for distinct recognition.

‘The conduct,’ wrote Lord Halifax, in explaining the overture which was made to him,<sup>1</sup> ‘which the Roman Catholics of this country are likely to observe in the course of the war with France and Spain is of great consequence. The French interest would, I believe, never have found any essential support; but a different effect might be apprehended from the Spanish connection. I have, therefore, watched the Catholics carefully, and I have now the pleasure of transmitting professions which I trust will give as much satisfaction to you as to me. Lord Trimleston<sup>2</sup> is the most sensible man belonging to the Catholics in this country. His weight with them is great, and he is most to be depended on. He assures me that all impressions in favour of the Stuart family are worn out with gentlemen of consequence and fortune in this country. The present war, he says, has occasioned such a strain on England, as has suggested to his majesty’s Roman Catholic subjects here, that means may possibly now be struck out whereby they may give proof of their loyalty. They have nothing so much at heart.

‘I reminded him that no Roman Catholic officer, without which he seemed to think that no considerable body of men could be raised, could by law be admitted

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Halifax and Egremont Correspondence, 1762.’ S. P. O. | from Sir Robert Barnewalle, created Lord Trimleston by Edward

<sup>2</sup> Robert Barnewalle, descended | IV.



into his majesty's service. He answered that their best endeavours should be exerted for the King's service in any way he should be pleased to direct. On so general an opening many ideas crowded on me; we are engaged in two wars when we were almost exhausted by one; what men will be wanted your lordship best knows. I asked whether, if his majesty's allies, Prussia, Hesse, Portugal, or any other friendly powers wanted troops, they could be raised. He said that what the Roman Catholics of Ireland most wished, as they could not by law serve under his majesty as king, was that they might be taken into his service as Elector of Hanover. He added, the Irish brigade in France are so disgusted with that service, that if a door was opened to them by his majesty they would crowd to it. An offer of this sort, and at such a time, would be suspicious if those who made it were not ready to give every pledge of their sincerity. Such as it is I lay it before your lordship.'

Enclosed in this letter was an address signed 'by the principal Catholic noblemen and gentlemen, professing to contain the sentiments of all Papists of consequence,' and a circular 'sent by the Catholic bishops to the priests of every parish in the kingdom.' The address expressed gratitude for past 'clemency.' It declared the eagerness of the Catholics of Ireland to exert themselves in their country's cause wherever they should be thought worthy to be employed; and it dwelt on the regret felt by them that hitherto they had been unable to give more than passive proofs of

the goodness of their disposition. The circular was to remind the congregations of the duty of obedience to the Government, and of the lenity and indulgence with which they had been lately treated. It bade them recollect that the penal laws had been enacted in reigns anterior to the accession of the House of Hanover.

The petition was well timed. It was modest in conception. It found England in a state of just and growing irritation with the Protestant Parliament and gentry.

'His majesty,' Egremont replied, 'receives with confidence and pleasure the assurances which Lord Trimleston has given, and you may signify as much to his lordship. Difficulties have been started as to the legality of the King's raising a body of Roman Catholics though for the service of the Elector of Hanover, but his majesty is desirous to give them an opportunity of exerting their loyalty. His majesty is about to send help to Portugal. It might be possible to induce a certain number of Catholics of Ireland to engage for a limited period in the Portuguese service. His majesty would count it as an effectual assistance and an agreeable mark of zeal.'<sup>1</sup>

The negotiation once opened ripened rapidly. Trimleston went to England to speak with the ministers. Lord Kenmare undertook the raising of the troops. Seven regiments were to be collected, drilled,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Egremont to Halifax, February 23, 1762.' S. P. O.

and armed in Ireland. They were to retain their privileges as British subjects. They were to be under the protection and virtually under the command of their own sovereign. The time of service was ten years, at the end of which they were to return to their country.<sup>1</sup>

The people were enthusiastic; recruits poured in. In a few weeks an Irish Catholic army would have been once more on foot. Unhappily the consent was needed of the Irish House of Commons, and a feeling, which Halifax regarded as ill-bred bigotry, blighted the promising experiment. Objections were raised that so many hands could not be spared from labour, objections of a hundred kinds, and from every party combined. The unexpressed but real ground of opposition was an obstinate and fanatical dislike to see 'favour or confidence shown to the Catholics.'<sup>2</sup>

Whether Irish Protestant bigotry or English liberalism had formed the more correct view of the situation will be immediately seen.

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<sup>1</sup> Proposals for the Catholic regiments, March 14. S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Halifax to Egremont, April 17, 1762.' S. P. O.

## SECTION III.

ORD TRIMLESTON and the Dublin Committee insisted that the Catholics of Ireland had been loyal to the British Government. Had the fact been as they represented it, Catholic loyalty would have furnished an answerable proof of the wisdom of the penal laws. The inveterate turbulence of the Irish race would have last yielded, and the rude assertion of authority and the demonstrated hopelessness of resistance would have broken a spirit which for six centuries had baffled any previous effort either to conciliate or subdue it. That the Catholic gentry who had retained part of their estates, and the leading Catholic clergy who understood the relative strength of the two countries, were unwilling to renew a struggle which, if unsuccessful, would entail fresh forfeitures and the execution of laws at present suspended, is doubtless perfectly true. That the other section of the Catholics, the heirs of the land which had been torn from their ancestors, and the dependents of the ruined families whose interests were the interests of their chiefs; that the poorer priests who identified their faith with their country, who looked to the unbroken spirit of the old race to reconquer for them the supremacy of their Church, that these were either disheartened or reconciled, that under any circumstances, short of full restoration and expiation, these men would cease to regard England and the English

connection with any feelings short of inveterate hatred, could be believed only by persons who were wilfully blind to the unchangeableness of the Irish disposition. Had the new owners of the soil resided on their estates, had they taught their unwilling tenants that the rule of England meant the rule of justice, had colonies of Scots and Englishmen been scattered over the land, had the Irish been able to learn by the contrast the material advantages of industry and energy, had they found in their conquerors beneficent masters who would have put down wrong-doing and oppression of man by man, who would have erected schools for their children, who would have treated them as human beings and helped them to live in decency, they were not framed so differently from the common posterity of Adam but that in time their prejudices would have given way. But to four-fifths of the Irish peasantry the change of masters meant only a grinding tyranny, and tyranny the more unbearable because inflicted by aliens in blood and creed. Under their own chiefs they had been miserable, but they were suffering at least at the hands of their natural sovereigns; and the clansman who bore his lord's name, and if harshly used by his own master, was protected by him against others, could not feel himself utterly without a friend. But the oppression of the peasantry in the last century was not even the oppression of a living man—it was the oppression of a system. The peasant of Tipperary was in the grasp of a dead hand. The will of a master whom he never saw was enforced against him by a law irresistible as destiny.

The absentee landlords of Ireland had neither community of interest with the people nor sympathy of race. They had no fear of provoking their resentment, nor they lived beyond their reach. They had no desire for their welfare, for as individuals they were ignorant of their existence. They regarded their Irish estates as the sources of their income; their only desire was to extract the most out of them which the soil could be made to yield; and they cared no more for the souls and bodies of those who were in fact committed to their charge than the owners of a West Indian plantation for the herds of slaves whose backs were blistering in the cane fields.

Thus universally through the southern provinces there was settled and sullen discontent. The peasantry continued to regard the land as their own; and with the general faith that wrong cannot last forever, they waited for the time when they would once more have possession of it. 'The lineal descendants of the old families,' wrote Arthur Young, in 1774, 'are now to be found all over the kingdom, working as cottiers on the lands which were once their own. In such great revolutions of property the ruined proprietors have usually been extirpated or banished. In Ireland the case was otherwise, and it is a fact that in most parts of the kingdom the descendants of the old land-owners regularly transmit by testamentary deed the memorial of their right to those estates which once belonged to their families.'<sup>1</sup> Acts of savage ferocity

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<sup>1</sup> *Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 133.

which burst out from time to time showed that the volcanic fires were unextinguished, and might at any moment break out once more ; and all along there was a secret connection between local agrarian passion and political disaffection. The Irish brigade served as an escape valve for the fiercer enthusiasts. The clergy had been directed from Rome to support the claims of the Pretender, and the Pretender's cause was never popular with the indigenous Irish. They had not forgiven the Act of Settlement or the cowardice which had betrayed them on the Boyne. They were ready, however, if a chance offered itself, and if there was no better outlook, to take arms in his favour ; and although Lord Trimleston might have said truly that the Catholic gentry had ceased to take an interest in the Stuart cause, he was deceiving himself or deceiving the Viceroy when he undertook to speak for the Catholics as a whole. Coincidentally with the intended invasion and the appearance on the coast of M. Thurot, began the celebrated Whiteboy disturbances in Tipperary. Many causes had combined at that moment to exasperate the normal irritation of the southern peasantry. With the growth of what was called civilization, absenteeism, the worst disorder of the country, had increased. In Charles the Second's time the absentees were few or none. But the better Irish gentlemen were educated, and the more they knew of the rest of the world, the less agreeable they found Ireland and Irish manners ; while the more they separated themselves from their estates, the more they increased their rents to support

the cost of living elsewhere. The rise in prices, the demand for salt beef and salt butter for exportation and for the fleets,<sup>1</sup> were revolutionizing the agriculture of Munster. The great limestone pastures of Limerick and Tipperary, the fertile meadow land universally, was falling into the hands of capitalist graziers, in whose favour the landlords, or the landlords' agents, were evicting the smaller tenants.<sup>2</sup> They had the aims of English men of business without the redeeming features of the English character. Their object was to make money, and they cared not at what cost to the people that object was attained; while they combined with their unscrupulousness the worst vices of the worst class of the lower Irish gentry, and were slovenly, extravagant, and dissipated.<sup>3</sup> To the peasantry these men were a curse. Common lands, where their own cows had been fed, were enclosed and taken from them. The change from tillage to grazing destroyed their employment. Their sole subsistence was from their potato gardens, the rents of which were heavily raised, while, by a curious mockery of justice, the grass lands were exempt from tythe, and the burden of maintaining

<sup>1</sup> The war gave an enormous stimulus to the salt beef trade. Not only were the English fleets supplied from Cork, but the French and Spanish as well.

<sup>2</sup> In Limerick, Tipperary, Clare, Meath, and Waterford there are to be found the greatest graziers and cowkeepers, perhaps, in the world: some who rent and occupy from 3000*l.* to 10,000*l.* a year.—ARTHUR

YOUNG, vol. ii. p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> These graziers are too apt to attend to their claret as much as to their bullocks; they live expensively; and being enabled from the nature of their business to pass nine-tenths of the year without any exertion of industry, contract such a habit of ease that works of improvement would be mortifying to their sloth.—Ibid.



the rectors and vicars of the Established Church was cast exclusively on the Catholic poor.

Among a people who are suffering under a common wrong there is a sympathy of resentment which links them together without visible or discoverable bond. In the spring of 1760 Tipperary was suddenly overrun by bands of midnight marauders. Who they were was a mystery. Rumours reached England of insurgent regiments drilling in the moonlight; of French officers observed passing and repassing the Channel. But no French officer could be detected in Munster; the most rigid search discovered no stands of arms, such as soldiers use or could use. This only was certain, that white figures were seen in vast numbers, like moving clouds, flitting silently at night over field and moor, leaving behind them the tracks of where they had passed in levelled fences and houghed and moaning cattle; where the owners were specially hateful, in blazing homesteads, and the inmates' bodies blackening in the ashes. Arrests were generally useless. The country was sworn to secrecy. Through the entire central plains of Ireland the people were bound by the most solemn oaths never to reveal the name of a confederate, or give evidence in a court of justice. When subpoenaed, forced to appear, and thus to perjure themselves on one side or the other, they preferred to keep the oath to their friends. Thus it was long uncertain how the movement originated, who were its leaders, and whether they were one or many. Letters signed by Captain Dwyer or Joanna Meskell were left at the

doors of obnoxious persons, ordering lands to be abandoned under penalties. If the commands were uncomplied with, the penalties were inexorably inflicted. In one fortnight four innocent girls, who had the misfortune to be the children of wealthy parents on Captain Dwyer's black list, were carried off, violated, and forced into marriage with the ceremonies which have been described elsewhere. Torture usually being preferred to murder, male offenders against the Whiteboys were houghed like their cattle, or their tongues were torn out by the roots. Another favourite amusement was to seize some poor wretch in his bed, carry him naked to a hill side, fling him into a pit lined with thorns, and filling in the earth to his chin, leave him to live or die.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Many Whiteboy letters are preserved in Dublin Castle. On March 11, 1760, Captain Dwyer gave notice that a certain John Harden had taken the lands of a worthy gentleman . . . He had promised on the Evangelists to restore them, and the promise was still unfulfilled. John Harden was informed that unless the deed of surrender was signed by a particular day, his house should be burnt, his cattle and his children should be houghed, his own tongue should be cut out, and he should then be shot dead and be 'sent to the shades below.'

Samuel Geylin, doubly obnoxious as a grazier and a revenue officer, who had been rash enough, like a notorious villain, to make a seizure of tobacco, was cautioned

to behave with more lenity and mildness, or he should have a brace of bullets in his body, &c. Other manifestoes were more temperate, and are instructive, as showing the real grievances of which the people had to complain. Here is one of them for the year 1762 :—

'We, levellers and avengers for the wrongs done to the poor, have unanimously assembled to raze walls and ditches that have been made to enclose the commons. Gentlemen now of late have learned to grind the face of the poor so that it is impossible for them to live. They cannot even keep a pig or a hen at their doors. We warn them not to raise again either walls or ditches in the place of those we destroy, nor even to en-

It was necessary to repress these atrocities. In a country which is unfortunately governed by a Parlia-

quire about the destroyers of them. If they do, their cattle shall be houghed and their sheep laid open in the fields. Gentlemen, we beg you will consider the case of the poor now-a-days. You that live on the fat of the land consider poor creatures whom you harass without means of proper subsistence. Use them better for the future, and do not imagine it is with a view of creating trouble for the Government we do this thing, for we are as loyal to our king and country as you are.'

The most interesting of all the Whiteboy papers is a letter from Joanna Meskell to a gentleman who had called a county meeting to concert measures for restoring order, or, as Joanna expressed it, 'for defeating the method I have taken to ward off an impending famine from my poor people which some persons erroneously call a rebellion.'

'Your Honour is sensible,' she says, 'that while of the land which their ancestors held at four or five shillings an acre they got a few acres at four pounds, to set potatoes in, they behaved peaceably and quietly. Your Honour is also sensible that the laws of the land have made no provision for them, and that the customs of the country seem to have been appointed for their total destruction and desolation; upstarts supplanting my poor people on expiration of their leases,

and stocking their lands with bullocks, a practice not known in any part of the world, Ireland only excepted. I have thought it incumbent on me to provide for the support of my people as inoffensively as I could, by ordering them to dig up a few fields, offering to occupiers treble rent for the same. As to the killing of cattle on a late occasion, it was intended as a scheme to awe some obstinate and uncharitable stock-jobbers into compliance with the just and necessary demands of my poor afflicted people. The premises considered, I flatter myself you will please to commiserate the deplorable state of the poor by putting the Tillage Act\* in force for them, for my army, which consists of no less than 500,000 effective men in this kingdom ready to take the field at a few hours' notice, cannot live on air. They shall be all entirely devoted to his majesty's service, provided they are used with lenity; but if at the instance of a few self-interested persons you shall take any violent or rigorous steps against them, no gentleman having been hitherto molested, you may blame yourselves for the consequence.

'Your Honour's obedient servant,

'JOANNA MESKELL.'

MSS. Dublin Castle.

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\* Act ordering all landholders to keep five acres in tillage out of every hundred which they occupied.

ment representing only the holders of property, the crimes of the poor receive more attention than the causes of them. The Irish gentry regarded the White-boy movement as an insurrection against the rights of property and the Protestant religion. The English Government, caring little for landlord or tenant, and less for Protestant ascendancy, enquired only whether the leaders were in correspondence with France. Egremont declared, on information of his own, that 'the grievances of the poor were a pretence.' 'The inveterate enemies of England, driven to despair elsewhere, were taking to Ireland as a last resource.'<sup>1</sup> Halifax, under the influence of Trimleston and the Dublin committee, persuaded himself that the disturbances had been encouraged by the ultra-Protestant faction to revive the terrors of Popery, and prevent the formation of the Irish Catholic regiments. Tipperary was proclaimed. Troops were sent to the baronies where the disorders had been most violent. Sir William Aston, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, went with a special commission to Clonmel, to try the prisoners with which the gaols were crowded. The result was the almost universal acquittal, which Halifax anticipated and desired. The prosecution broke down for want of evidence. The House of Commons had appointed a committee to enquire into the causes of 'the Popish insurrection of Munster.'<sup>2</sup> Halifax insisted that the most careful scrutiny had failed to discover any

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<sup>1</sup> 'Egremont to Halifax, April 13, 1762.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> *Commons' Journals*, April 12, 1762.

traces either of political or religious disaffection; that the riots had been purposely exaggerated, and were completely at an end.<sup>1</sup> Five Whiteboys were executed at Waterford, whose guilt, after all, was but half proved. A few more were sent on board the fleet. The rest of the prisoners were dismissed; and so well pleased were the peasantry with the Chief Justice, that when the commission was over, and he left Clonmel, the road was lined with women and children, imploring blessings on him, upon their knees.

Yet Egremont, after all, had been partially right, and the House of Commons partially right; and of the three interpretations given of the Whiteboy rising, that of Halifax and Aston was the furthest from the truth. The acquittal might have been just if oppression be an excuse for crime. Yet, as in 1797, behind the defenders lay the schemes of the United Irishmen, so in 1762, behind the agrarian riots lay treason, political and religious; and the wrongs of the exasperated peasantry were only the instruments of intriguing and more dangerous incendiaries. The most remarkable feature in the story is the success with which, though thousands were acquainted with the secret, an organised scheme of revolt, encouraged by some at least of the highest persons in the Catholic Church, was concealed from the strictest investigation. Halifax, at the close of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'I can assure you, if his majesty should accidentally lay aside the plan of the Roman Catholic corps, he will hear nothing further of the rioters, who will be considered again what they always were, a rabble destitute of employment and wretched in their circumstances.'—  
'Halifax to Egremont, April 17, 1762.'

session of 1762, congratulated Parliament on the restoration of order; yet order was not restored. The nightly orgies of the Whiteboys, after Aston's return to Dublin, continued precisely as before. Emboldened by impunity, they became at length so terrible, that for three years they were the lawgivers and masters of Tipperary. The police had no existence. The parish constables were no match for the secret societies, and the scanty garrisons of soldiers were not allowed to be too active. The large landowners were absentees. The magistrates were the smaller gentry, the clergy, and the middlemen. They lived at a distance from each other, and with few servants; and exposed to vengeance in detail, they were too prudent to bring Captain Dwyer's and Joanna's armies on them. Occasional arrests were attempted after some unusually audacious outrage; but the signal vengeance always taken upon informers made legal convictions impossible. Prisoners were rescued from their escorts by armed and disciplined bodies, who attacked them on the roads, and from 1762 to 1765 the central plain of Ireland, from Mallow to Westmeath, was under Captain Dwyer's dictatorship. His rule had its merits. The graziers were brought to their bearings. The landlords, in fear of him, lowered their rents. Unfortunately he had less innocent aims, on which the Whiteboy fortunes were shipwrecked. Presuming on impunity, they attacked a village in Waterford, which was armed and prepared to receive them. They were beaten back, with a loss of thirty or forty men. The gentry recovered courage. Lord Carrick and Lord

Drogheda set themselves at the head of an active combination to restore the regular authority. Bodies were formed of armed volunteers. Where property was destroyed, the baronies were assessed for compensation, and were compelled to pay. High rewards were offered for information, and as law re-asserted itself, the terrors by degrees wore away. It had been evident from the first, to those who knew the country, that more was at work than peasant discontent. As the dread of vengeance was removed, the mystery was at length revealed.

Suspicion had many times been directed to the parish priest of Clogheen, in Tipperary, Father Nicholas Sheehy. In patriotic histories this reverend person is described as of 'Quixotic turn of mind,' with a quick resentment against wrong, and eagerness to redress it. He had made himself conspicuous in the defence of prisoners. His parish was notorious as a Whiteboy centre. It was assumed that he could not be ignorant of the secrets of his flock. More than once he was arrested and indicted under the Registration Act; but the prosecution failed, and Father Nicholas was still at large. At length, after the affair in Waterford, when active measures were resumed, an informer named Bridges disappeared under circumstances which made it certain that he had been murdered. An escort of troops, carrying a prisoner to Clonmel gaol, was set upon near Sheehy's house, and several soldiers were killed. He was suspected of being concerned in the rescue. He was charged with high treason, and a

reward of 300*l.* was offered for his capture. Secure of the fidelity of those whose evidence could alone convict him, Father Nicholas wrote to the Secretary, offering to surrender, if he could be tried, not at Clonmel, but in Dublin. The condition was accepted. He was brought to the bar. The evidence was insufficient, and he was triumphantly acquitted. The Lords Justices were certain of his guilt, though, as often happens in Ireland, they could not produce their proofs. There was a second charge, which they believed that they could bring home to him. He was charged with his brother Edmund—Buck Sheehy as the brother was called—with being concerned in the informer's murder. The promise made to him had been observed in the letter, it was, perhaps, broken in the spirit when he was sent back, to be tried for murder, from Dublin to Clonmel.

So great was the excitement, that at the time of the trial the court-house was surrounded by a party of cavalry. The body of Bridges had not been found, and witnesses came forward to swear that he had left the country. It was proved, however, that there had been a conspiracy to murder him, and that the Sheehies knew it. A Mr. Keating, described as a gentleman of property in the county, offered to prove that Father Nicholas was at his house on the night when, if ever, the murder was committed; but Mr. Hewetson, a clergyman and an active magistrate, rose in court, and said that he had a charge against Keating for having been present at the killing of the soldiers. Keating's



evidence was refused, and he was committed to the gaol at Kilkenny. The Sheehies were found guilty, and were both hanged. It was an extreme measure. The breach of faith in returning the prisoner to Tipperary, the military occupation of the town, the non-discovery of the body, and the refusal to hear his witness, led to an impression, even with moderate persons, that he had been unfairly dealt with. Both he and his brother protested their innocence on the scaffold. The Crown counsel, acting on secret information, asked him if the Whiteboys were connected with France or the Pretender. He declared that he had never heard of any such connection, and disbelieved in its existence. Then and afterwards, therefore, the Irish Catholics insisted that Father Sheehy was a murdered man. With a curious paralogism they regarded him as the victim of his love for Ireland, and, at the same time, as guiltless of having shown it; and he was raised on the spot to an honoured place in the Irish martyrology. His tomb became a place of pilgrimage—a scene at which the Catholic Celt could renew annually his vow of vengeance against the assassins of Ireland's saints. The stone which lay above his body was chipped in pieces by enthusiastic relic hunters. The execution is among the stereotyped enormities which justify an undying hatred against the English rule and connection.

Yet the Government essentially was right; and if treason and murder are crimes at all in Ireland, Father Sheehy was as deep a criminal as ever swung from crossbeam. He died as others had died, keeping the

oath of secrecy which he had sworn as a Whiteboy, and going out of the world with a lie upon his lips, to leave a doubt of the justice of his sentence as a stain upon the law which had condemned him. Either to set at rest the misgivings which Sheehy's words had caused, or relieved of their fears by the restored energy of the law, Father O'Brien, the coadjutor of the Archbishop of Cashel, and four other Catholic gentlemen, came forward and revealed, under oath, the inner history of Whiteboyism. Father O'Brien swore to having been told by the Archbishop of Cashel that the rising of the Whiteboys was for the advancement of the Catholic faith and the extirpation of heresy; that as there was but one God, there would soon be but one religion; and that with the help of France the *Vetus Hibernia* should be restored. A fund had been regularly collected by the Catholic priests in the diocese in support of the movement. The person by whom the money was distributed was Father Nicholas Sheehy. David Landregan swore that he had been made a Whiteboy in 1762; that at his initiation he had sworn to be faithful to the King of France and Prince Charles. Many times he had gone on night expeditions with the Sheehies and their friend Keating. They had meant to murder Lord Carrick, Sir Thomas Maude, and Mr. Hewetson, and had been prevented only by the Sheehies' arrest. Five hundred of them had met one night on the race-course at Clogheen. Lord Drogheda with a detachment of troops was in the town. Father Sheehy had proposed to set it on fire, and destroy them. The

priest of Ardfinnan, as they were about to do it, fell on his knees, and gave them his curse if they moved. 'For,' he said, 'we are not yet ripe for such a blow, nor can we, till Prince Charles and his friends from France land for our assistance. If we attempt it before that time, every Protestant in Ireland will be in arms, and give no quarter to man, woman, or child of us.'

Mr. Rawley, of Tipperary, professed to have been sworn a Whiteboy by the Archbishop himself. Again his oath had been to be faithful to France and Prince Charles. The French were coming, with the Prince at their head, and then Ireland was to rise.

James French had been enlisted by Father Sheehy. He had a commission as major in the Pretender's service, and had received his pay regularly from Father Sheehy's hands. Their principal leaders were four Catholic prelates — the Archbishops of Cashel and Dublin, and the Bishops of Waterford and Cork. At a great meeting at Drumlannon he saw Father Sheehy produce a Bull, which came, as he said, from the Pope, granting pardon and indulgence to any Catholic who might pretend to be a Protestant, 'the better to carry on their enterprise, and restore the Catholic religion.'

Finally, a woman named Mary Butler described the attack on the soldiers. Father Sheehy, she said, though the Dublin jury had acquitted him, was the contriver of the plot and the deviser of its method. The Whiteboys had collected on the road, under pretence of a sham funeral. A sham coffin had been made for them to follow. Sheehy saw them in their places, and then left

them to their work, hurrying off to say mass at his own chapel, that he might be able to prove an alibi.

These depositions were sworn to with the usual formalities before the Mayor of Kilkenny and other magistrates.<sup>1</sup> They proved nothing against the sincerity of the Catholic press and the Catholic merchants of Dublin; but they proved indisputably that there was a second Catholic Ireland, unreconciled and unreconcilable, of the existence of which they were unconscious, and that to trust to these gentlemen as the exponents of the feelings of their countrymen was fond and infatuated credulity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See them in the First Appendix to Musgrave's *History of the Irish Rebellion*.

<sup>2</sup> I have told Father Sheehy's story at some length, on account of the prominence given to it by Irish historians. The celebrated Father O'Leary—the most plausible, and, perhaps, essentially the falsest of all Irish writers—asserted twenty years later that Bridges, for whose murder Sheehy had been hanged, was still alive. Mr. Daniel Toler brought O'Leary's statement before the House of Commons. 'He was himself,' he said. 'High Sheriff of

Tipperary when Sheehy suffered. . . . He had empanelled a most respectable jury. Sheehy had been convicted on the fullest and clearest evidence. . . . He had visited him afterwards in the gaol, when he confessed that Bridges had been murdered, though he denied that he had himself a hand in it. He had drawn attention to the matter,' Mr. Toler said, 'to detect such agitators as Mr. O'Leary in their falsehood. A cause that required such advocates and such means of defence must be desperate indeed.' —*Irish Debates*, vol. vii. p. 342.

## SECTION IV.

THE war which was closed by the Peace of Paris, in February, 1763, had cost England more than a hundred millions. Ireland had contributed in proportion to her resources. She had increased her debt by five hundred thousand pounds. She had added fifty thousand a year while the fighting lasted to the half million which was annually expended on her military establishment. So great, and not greater, was the value of Ireland to the empire after six centuries of occupation. The Irish brigade which turned the scale at Fontenoy furnished more than an equivalent on the other side, and reduced her weight to zero. England came out of the conflict with singular glory. Though Pitt resigned before it was over, his genius, as Horace Walpole said, shone still 'like an annihilated star.' The work had been too completely done for Bute and Grenville to spoil it. Ireland lay the while like some ill-kept back premises in the rear of the Imperial mansion, fit only to be concealed, and as far as possible forgotten. She had been in danger of invasion, yet she was left undefended. Forty-two regiments furnished her nominal army contingent. There were not troops enough in the island to keep the peace of Tipperary. The charge for the Ordnance Department was 45,000*l.* The whole artillery in the kingdom would not furnish out a thirty-gun

gate.<sup>1</sup> The linen trade had been crippled by French cruisers. The Dublin woollen weavers, once decent and well disposed, had taken to drink and oratory. They stopped their work on Saturday afternoon; they were not fit to resume it till Tuesday morning, and they had formed unions to raise the wages rate to make good the lost day. 'Decency in dwelling and apparel, which was formerly obtained among them, was almost eradicated. In the place of it were idleness, filth, nastiness, with unbounded licentiousness of manners.'<sup>2</sup> The profits of smuggling had declined, through the substitution of mangled cattle for sheep. The salt beef and salt butter trade alone flourished, and in flourishing drove the peasantry into rebellion. The Viceroys so detested their occupation, that for six months only in alternate years they could be induced to reside at the Castle. In the interval the country was governed by the Lords Justices, usually from the same families: a Boyle, a Grosvenor, a Ponsonby, and perhaps the Primate. The Lords Justices' object was to distribute the patronage among their relations, while England's chief concern again appeared to be to quarter on the Irish Pension List such scandalous persons as could not decently be provided for at home.

Such was the beautiful condition of unlucky Ireland when Halifax left it to take his place in Lord Bute's administration. The Earl of Northumberland was sent to Dublin instead of him. The Pension List was likely

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, December 3, 1763.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, February 28, 1764.

to be assailed as soon as Parliament met; and the Cabinet thought it prudent to affect to intend concession. Northumberland was directed to inform 'the principal persons of both Houses that except in cases of a particular nature, of which the King could be the only judge, his majesty did not intend to grant any more pensions either for life or a term of years, and that the King's servants in England did not mean for the future to recommend such grants.' The intimation was designed to anticipate the intemperate action of Parliament. But the Viceroy was not to allow interference. If the Commons brought addresses to him on the subject, he was not to notice them. The prerogative must not be encroached upon, nor any step be taken 'which would cast a public reflection on the past.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus instructed, Northumberland arrived in Dublin in the autumn of 1763. In the speech from the throne he announced the Peace, a reduction of the expenditure and a probable surplus in the revenue. The address in reply was cold, dictated, so Halifax believed, by the malevolence of Speaker Ponsonby. On the second day of the session the anticipated attack was made. A motion was introduced for an examination of the list of persons in receipt of his majesty's bounty. Northumberland, supposing that he was carrying out his orders, met it by the communication which he had been told to convey. He spoke warmly of the King's

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<sup>1</sup> 'Halifax to Northumberland, October 22, 1763.' S. P. O.

desire to comply with Ireland's wishes ; and the Council, supposing the Cabinet was in earnest, never dreaming that Bute and his fellow-ministers would condescend to trifle with them, sketched a form of grateful acknowledgment in which the House of Commons was to return its thanks.<sup>1</sup> Prepared as he must be for any extremity of folly in the dealings of English Cabinets with the interests of Ireland, the reader will learn without surprise that Bute and his fellow-ministers had never seriously thought of surrendering the pensions at all.

The Viceroy sent over the draft for approval : he was informed in return that he had misconceived his directions. He had received a message which he was to have delivered in private to a few persons whose influence might have prevented discussion in the House of Commons. In making it public he had committed a fatal indiscretion. Angry with Northumberland, angry with the Irish Council, angry with everything but their own scandalous and dishonest purpose, the Cabinet treated the proposed address as an insult to the Crown, 'disgraceful to the chief governor of the kingdom, disrespectful and undutiful to his majesty.' 'The King's goodness,' Halifax wrote, 'required a more grateful

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<sup>1</sup> The Irish Parliament was to describe itself 'as full of gratitude for those gracious intentions relating to grants of offices and pensions signified by your majesty to the Lord Lieutenant. Thus anticipating our desire by a provident

and watchful care over the interests of your people, your majesty will, in a peculiar manner, distinguish your reign,' &c.

Form enclosed by the Viceroy to Lord Halifax for approval.  
S. P. O.



return than that he should be compelled to pare and abridge the rights of the Crown by a declaration almost equivalent to an Act of Parliament.'<sup>1</sup>

The childish trifling irritated the growing discontent.

1763 The manœuvring with the Catholics assumed a more sinister complexion when accompanied with so evident a purpose of misappropriating the Irish revenues. The Parliament was unable to perceive in what the 'goodness,' which they were asked to admire, consisted, and the session was spent in a series of violent motions which the utmost efforts of Government were required to defeat. A resolution was passed in November condemning the increase of the Civil List. A committee was appointed to examine the claims of the various gentlemen and ladies for whom Ireland was made to provide, and the enquiry was too dangerous to be encountered.

Northumberland, after so sharp a reprimand, ventured nothing more on his own responsibility. What was he to do? The Lords Justices, he said, promised to prevent the committee from sitting, but he could not trust the Lords Justices. The servants of the Crown were lukewarm. Men in office were found 'dividing on the discontented side in all trying questions.' 'Am I,' he asked, 'to temporize with the present evil and make the best composition I can, or shall I strenuously assert his majesty's prerogative, dismiss these ungrate-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Halifax to Northumberland, October, 27, 1763.' S. P. O.

ful servants, and reward others with their places who have deserved well?'<sup>1</sup>

The alternative was between disgraceful humiliation and persistence no less disgraceful in scandalous injustice. The ministry shuffled out of it as best they could. The Viceroy was allowed to confirm the promise that for the present at least the pension giving should be suspended. 'His majesty,' Halifax said (and never was king's name more abused by his ministers), 'was extremely displeased, both with the Lords Justices and his other bad servants. The Cabinet, however, had decided on consideration 'that it would be unwise to throw the public business into confusion by depriving them of their offices.' The Viceroy was left to his discretion, being warned only to avoid pledging the Government to engagements beyond the present session.'<sup>2</sup>

Such was English government in Ireland, such the occupation of the Irish Legislature, at a time when even in the richest portion of the island the law was in suspense—when quiet people could not sleep in their beds without a military guard, and the sole authority recognized and obeyed was the Whiteboy Committee. At this moment, under the brief administration of Lord Rockingham, but whether at Rockingham's instance is more than questionable, a light breaks across the scene as if from the blue sky itself. The triumvirate which

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<sup>1</sup> 'Northumberland to Halifax, November 10, 1763.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Halifax to Northumberland, November 26.' S. P. O.

had so long monopolized the power and patronage was broken in 1764 by death. Primate Stone died and went to the place appointed for him. Lord Shannon died. Ponsonby only was left. But Shannon's heir and successor was married to Ponsonby's daughter. The faction was likely to re-establish itself under a new form, and to recommence a compact of corruption. The young King appears now to have personally interposed, and tried the experiment whether Ireland might not be managed by open rectitude and real integrity. Northumberland retired after two years. Lord Weymouth was named in his place, but did not come over. Lord Hertford was the next actual Viceroy, and there  
 1765 remains addressed to Hertford and signed by George the Third, a paper of instructions so confidential, so full of references to himself, so entirely different from the ordinary official ambiguities, that they can scarcely be referred to any other source than the King's own mind.

The new Lord Lieutenant was directed to inform himself completely of the true condition of the country and to acquaint the King. He was to attend particularly to the Church; as Crown livings fell vacant he was charged to appoint only pious and orthodox persons who would bind themselves to reside on their benefices, to make other patrons do the same, and thus before all other reforms to see that God Almighty was well served.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I cannot positively state that | Castle there is no other indication  
 in the entire correspondence of the | of a sense of responsibility on the  
 Home Government with Dublin | part of English ministers as to the

The service of God being reformed, the next step was to put an end to fraud. Every public department in Ireland was saturated with dishonesty. There were frauds in the revenue, frauds in the muster reports, frauds in the ordnance and the victualling stores; evasion, jobbery, and peculation, where there was any public property to be stolen and official hand to steal it. These things were to be searched into, and so far as possible to be set upon a better foundation.—So far as possible. But even as the King wrote, it seemed to flash across him how deep the roots of the Upas-tree of corruption, penetrating below the bed of the channel and piercing to his own Cabinet, and even to his own person, if the sign manual could be taken as evidence against him.

‘When letters come from us,’ he said, ‘ordering money to be paid for public uses, and other private letters for the payment of money to particular persons, you will prefer the public letter before the private. Pay no attention to any letter from us granting money or lands, unless on petition previously sent through you, and examined and reported on by competent persons. Give no orders upon any letters of ours, either for pensions, money, lands, or titles of honour, unless such

persons appointed to benefices in the reformed Church of Ireland. can but say that in the many thousand Irish State Papers which I have examined, covering the connection between the two countries from the accession of Elizabeth to the Union, this is the only such

paper which I have found. Was it for an English minister to turn round upon the Establishment and speak of it as the branch of a Upas-tree? Is the Irish Church to blame if it has failed of its mission?

letters have been entered at our signet office. If warrants come to you contrary to these instructions, do not execute them. Should the revenue fall short of the cost of the establishment, you will take care that the same is not applied to the payment of pensions, till the rest is first paid. If there be not enough, you will abate the pensions.'

The remaining orders in this singular document are no less straightforward and characteristic. If genius means an eagerness for change, a wild rushing after new ideas, an enthusiasm for emancipation from restraint, George the Third was the most commonplace of sovereigns. If genius means a loyal recognition of the old and tried principles established by the experience of ages for the guidance of mankind, George the Third was a safer ruler of a great empire than the most accomplished parliamentary rhetorician. He bade Hertford look to judges and magistrates, remove those who neglected their duty, and to fill their places with men of better merit. He gave him power over all officials, of all degrees, to appoint or dismiss. If any man was found to have paid money for an office, he was to be immediately discharged. A sharp eye was to be kept on Papists. The Viceroy must issue a proclamation, bidding them bring in their arms, and deposit them in the arsenals, and he must see the order obeyed. All lawful encouragement was to be given to Protestant strangers resorting to Ireland; if many wished to settle there, 'report to us,' the King said, 'and they shall have all the help we can give.'

The Articles of Limerick and Galway were to be strictly construed. Licenses to the Catholic gentry to have guns or powder were to be conceded rarely, and with special caution. Outlawries were not to be reversed without permission from the Crown.

The disorders had extended to the army. 'Survey all the forts in the kingdom,' the order went on. 'Report to us on the defences and on the stores. See that the troops are quartered so as to create least inconvenience to our subjects. See that the soldiers' pay is not withheld by the officers, and that misconduct, whether in high or low, does not pass unnoticed. If the officers fight duels, cashier them from time to time. Inform such officers as shall send or receive any challenge, or shall affront one another, that they shall never be employed in our service.'

Finally, as if he was conscious where the real difficulty lay, though too young as yet to know it to be insurmountable, he concluded this singular paper with a last injunction :—

'You will not summon a Parliament without our special command.'<sup>1</sup>

The King had struck the key-note of all Ireland's sorrows. How easy, had there been no Parliament, the task of governing Ireland! How easy, with a moderate police, to have distributed equal justice, to have forced the landlords to do their duties; to have forced the people, unexasperated by petty tyranny, to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Instructions to the Earl of Hertford from the King, August 9, 1765, abridged. S. P. O.'

submit to a law which would have been their friend! How easy to have punished corruption, to have blown away the malaria which enveloped the public departments; to have established schools; to have dealt equal measure to loyal subjects of every creed! The empire which the genius of Clive won for England presented a problem of government harder far than Ireland presented. Yet British faculty found means to solve it. What enchantment had condemned Ireland to be the victim of a constitution of which chicanery, injustice, anarchy, and moral dissolution were the inevitable fruits? Infinitely happier it would have been for Ireland—happier, better, even cheaper in the long run for England, could her ministers have adopted loyally the scheme of government sketched by the King, have dispensed with Parliament, fallen back on the hereditary revenue, and made good the deficiency out of the English exchequer. But even this method, too, it is likely that parliamentary exigencies in England would soon have degraded to the old level.

Reform, at any rate, was not attainable on the honest road which had been traced by the King; nor was Hertford, an absentee nobleman, and one of the unconscious instruments of the worst disorders of the country, a person to be trusted for such a purpose. An attempt was to be made to crush the oligarchy of the Shannons and Ponsonbies. The old vicious circle was to be broken through, but by such means as were available under the constitution. Hertford retreated, after a brief ineffectual rule—the last of the Viceroy's whose

presence at the Castle was limited to the parliamentary session. Thus much was recognized, that thenceforward the representative of the Crown must be a permanent resident; that the Lords Justices must be dispensed with, except for accidental exigencies, and the patronage be distributed by the Lord Lieutenant. It was a nice operation, requiring courage, dexterity, discretion, firmness, qualities social and intellectual not often combined. Lord Bristol was first thought of. He accepted the office, and prepared to enter on it; but the longer he looked at what was expected from him, the less he liked the prospect. Lord Bristol's most important act of authority was to appoint his brother Frederic to the Bishopric of Cloyne—of all misuses of Irish Church patronage the grossest instance. He died soon after, and the bishop succeeded to the earldom, to play a memorable part in the development of the coming drama. The nobleman finally selected to carry out the intended alterations in the Irish Government was Lord Townshend, distinguished hitherto as a soldier, grandson of Walpole's Townshend, and brother of Charles, who was now English Chancellor of the Exchequer.



## SECTION V.

A FEW more words of prelude are necessary before we enter on the remarkable administration which was to form an epoch in Irish history. It has been sufficient so far to notice the general drift of the stream, on the surface of which individuals are seen occupied in paltry schemes to improve their own fortunes, not one of them as yet, however, with sufficient power to influence materially the policy or the fate of the country. The practical force in the Parliament was in the hands of a few families, who nominated the majority of the representatives. No questions had as yet been stirred on which the people were passionately interested; and minor scandals had been made use of only as a means of embarrassing the Government. On the edge of a great change, we pause for a moment to notice a few persons, some of whom had made themselves felt already as troublesome, and were about to pass to the front of the stage; some still obscure and unheard of, but meditating in the enthusiasm of passionate youth on Ireland's miseries, and dreaming of coming revolutions.

First in rank was the Duke of Leinster, and individually the first in influence. The House of Kildare was the most powerful in Ireland, and the head of it was the natural leader of the Irish people. But the Kildares, at all periods of their history, preferred to rule alone or not at all. Many times the Viceroys had

attempted to draw them into combination with other parties, but always without success. The Duke of Bedford laboured hard with the reigning Earl, but the Earl refused to work with the Ponsonbies. Once only, for a few months, he tried the office of Lord Justice, and had retired, leaving the field to his rivals; while his ambition had been gratified, and his mortification soothed, by special distinction in the peerage. In 1761 he was made a marquis. In 1766 he was created duke, being then about fifty-six years old, the one duke of which Ireland could boast. He was married to a daughter of the Duke of Richmond, and was the father of seventeen children, one of whom, born in 1763, and thus three years old when Lord Townshend came to Dublin, became known to the world thirty-five years later as Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

Lord Shannon's father, the reader will remember as Henry Boyle, Speaker of the House of Commons, who, after heading the opposition to the Government, sold his patriotism for an earldom and a pension. His son Richard, who succeeded to the title in 1764, was a politician of his father's school, under forty, with his life still before him, married to Speaker Ponsonby's daughter, and aiming steadily with the Ponsonby alliance at controlling the Castle, and dispensing the patronage of ministers. He had enormous wealth, and in private made an honourable use of it. Arthur Young, who visited him at Castle Martyr in 1771, speaks with unusual enthusiasm of his merit as an Irish landlord.

Next in consequence to Lord Shannon was the

Speaker, the Right Honourable John Ponsonby, second brother of the Earl of Bessborough. The Duke of Devonshire had been twice Viceroy—in 1737 and 1743. Lord Hartington was Viceroy in 1755. The long presence of the Cavendish family at the Castle was favourable to the Ponsonby fortunes. Lord Bessborough married one of the duke's daughters, and was Lord Justice in 1756. John Ponsonby married another, became Speaker when Boyle was raised to the peerage, and was made Lord Justice also. The links of the family compact are easily visible. The virtual sovereignties of Ireland threatened to become hereditary. From this John Ponsonby came George, afterwards friend of his country and Lord Chancellor, who was now a boy of eleven.

Of the House of Commons' orators who had made names must be mentioned—

1. Mr. Hely Hutchinson, a barrister of large practice, who had risen in his profession through a seat in Parliament, and had become known as a patriot orator. Speaking and voting against Government, less on principle than as the surest road to advancement, on the appropriation of the surplus, the Pension and the Septennial Bills, Mr. Hutchinson had shown that he could be dangerous. In practical business he had made himself really useful, so far as was compatible with attention to himself.

2. Mr. Sexton Pery, a lawyer also, and the son of a Limerick clergyman, represented his native city. He, too, was a patriot, and had earned impatient notice in

the letters of Viceroy and Secretaries. He had been tempted with the Solicitor-Generalship, and had refused it. It was assumed that, like others, he was purchasable, but the Government had not yet discovered at what price he could be secured.

3. A third barrister, remarkable in himself, and remarkable as the father of a more celebrated son, was John Fitzgibbon. He, like Pery, came from Limerick, but from the cabin of a Catholic peasant. The Fitzgibbons were of Norman blood, once wealthy and powerful, but now reduced by forfeitures, and there remained of them only a few families, renting their few acres of potato garden on the estates of their ancestors. Young John, in defiance of the law, had been sent to Paris to be educated, and was intended for a priest. He had no taste for the priestly calling. The Catholic religion itself became incredible to him. He went to London, found means of studying law, and brought himself into notice, while still keeping his terms, by publishing a volume of Reports. Admitted to the Irish bar, he rose early into practice, realized a considerable fortune, and bought a large estate at Mountshannon, in his native county. He sat in Parliament for Newcastle, in the county of Dublin, and he stood almost alone in desiring nothing which Castle favour could give, aspiring to no rank, and content with the wealth which he had earned. To a Government which had aimed at ruling Ireland by honest methods, the elder Fitzgibbon would have been an invaluable servant; to the Halifaxes and Northumberlands, though

he never stooped to factious opposition, he was an object of suspicion and dislike. John Fitzgibbon the younger, who grew to be Chancellor and Earl of Clare, was born in 1748, and was now gaining his early laurels at Trinity College.

Noticeable, however, beyond all his contemporaries, already prominent in the House of Commons, already concentrating in himself the passionate hopes of all young generous-minded Irishmen, was the celebrated Henry Flood. Like the younger Fitzgibbon, Flood was born into a position which secured him from the temptation of making politics a trade. His father, Warden Flood, was Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and as Attorney-General had amassed considerable property. Henry, the eldest son, was born in 1732. He passed without particular distinction through the Irish University. From Dublin he went as a gentleman commoner to Oxford, where he became noted rather as an ornamental youth of letters than as an aspirant for University honours. Irish genius runs naturally to words. Henry Flood was a student of Demosthenes, and his special ambition was to be an orator. His enslaved and unhappy country weighed upon his spirits. She was in bondage; the chains cramped her limbs, and therefore she was miserable. She pined for liberty, and liberty, as Flood understood it, 'was the child of eloquence.' Not by hard attention to the facts of life; not by submission to the inflexible laws which must be obeyed before they will be our servants; not by patient undoing the triple-stranded cord of idleness, extrava-

gance, and anarchy, in which the object of his affection was truly held in servitude; not by these, but on the short bright road of bounding oratory lay Ireland's path towards redemption. Let parliamentary eloquence breathe into the souls of her people, and the foul enchantment would disappear, and Ireland would rise up in her native loveliness. With these ideas in him, and with an estate of 5000*l.* a year to fall to him on his father's death, Henry Flood, being then twenty-seven years old, entered Parliament as member for Kilkenny in 1759. He was re-elected on the King's death for the same county, and, with a handsome figure, a rich sonorous voice, and a mind stored with the phrases which millions of young Irish hearts were then prepared to accept as the Open Sesame of Paradise, he became at once the idol of Irish patriotism, catching the torch which was dropping from the failing hand of Charles Lucas, and eclipsing alike the waning brilliancy of Anthony Malone and the meridian splendour of Hely Hutchinson.

Other eminent persons will be heard of in front places on the stage of Irish politics. For special reasons, those which have been mentioned must particularly be borne in mind; and there must be added to the list the name of another young man, then the rival of John Fitzgibbon at Trinity College—as he was his rival afterwards on the broader platform of life. Grattan has been beatified by tradition as the saviour of his country. In his own land his memory is adored. His glittering declamations are studied as models of oratory wherever

the English language is spoken. Fitzgibbon is the object of a no less intense national execration. He was followed to his grave with curses, and dead cats were flung upon his coffin. If undaunted courage, if the power to recognize and the will to act upon unpalatable truths, if the steady preference of fact to falsehood, if a resolution to oppose at all hazards those wild illusions which have lain at all times at the root of Ireland's unhappiness, be the constituents of greatness in an Irish statesman, Grattan and Fitzgibbon are likely hereafter to change places in the final estimate of history.

Grattan was the elder by two years. His father also was in Parliament. He was Recorder of Dublin and member for the city. John Fitzgibbon was born in 1748, Henry Grattan in 1746. They were at school together, and afterwards at college, where both carried off the highest prizes. From Trinity they went to London, to study law at the Temple, but here their paths divided. Grattan was left fatherless when he was under nineteen. He inherited little property, and had his own fortune to make for himself; but he disliked the bar, and remained for some time uncertain what career he should adopt. Fitzgibbon was heir to a large estate; but he threw himself earnestly into his profession, and long before the Counsellor died was in the first flight of Irish lawyers.

The parliamentary life of these two young men had yet to begin. Let it be understood that their manhood was maturing and their minds were forming in the scenes about to be described.

## CHAPTER II.

## LORD TOWNSHEND'S ADMINISTRATION.

## SECTION I.

GEORGE, third Viscount Townshend, was selected as Viceroy of Ireland in the summer of 1767, under the last administration of Lord Chatham, having just succeeded to the title by his father's death. His career in the army had been creditable, if not particularly brilliant. He was with Wolfe on the heights of Abraham, and General Monckton, the second in command, having been carried off wounded early in the action, Townshend, when Wolfe fell, became superior officer, and signed the capitulation of Quebec.<sup>1</sup> His brother Charles died immediately after his nomination, and in the first sorrow for the loss of father and brother he entered upon his intricate office. In appearance the new Viceroy was a *bon vivant*; in his manners easy; in his conversation humorous, and

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<sup>1</sup> The popular leaders in Ireland had no claim. History, in the charged Townshend with having hands of Irish writers, has often a cheated Monckton of his laurels, tendency to become mythological. and stolen an honour to which he See *Baratariana*, p. 94.



seemingly frank and transparent. He was as ready with a proverb as Sancho Panza,<sup>1</sup> and let fall, it was said, in half an hour, and as it were by accident, more good things than could be heard in a session even of the Irish Parliament, where wit was never wanting. Besides these qualities he had others undiscovered by the patriots whose object he defeated. He displays in his letters an unusually noble disposition, a contempt approaching to loathing for the measures to which he was compelled to stoop, and for the men whom he was obliged to conciliate by the necessities of Parliamentary Government. The King adhered to the views expressed in his instructions to Hertford, and Townshend had come with a loyal intention to put an end, as far as possible, to Irish jobbery and Irish anarchy. Pitt's Government had resolved in sincerity to have done with pensions, sinecure offices, and bribery. The promise which Halifax had allowed Northumberland to give dishonestly, Townshend was really to act upon. The Irish politicians were to have an opportunity of showing whether their complaints had been sincere, whether they were prepared to co-operate loyally and without the need of underhand influence in measures of genuine reform.

The first necessity was to protect the public peace. The Whiteboys were scarcely quieted in the south: when the gentry relaxed their efforts, disturbances would inevitably recommence. Landlord exactions had

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<sup>1</sup> This peculiarity was the occasion of the name *Barataria* being given to Ireland in the squibs and essays published by Flood and his friends.

provoked a convulsion, presently to be described, in Ulster, with which the magistrates were no less unable to cope. It had been determined, if Parliament would consent, to add three thousand men to the ordinary garrison to do the work of police. Again, the Irish judges, like the judges in the colonies, had hitherto held office during pleasure. English ministers had been peculiarly tenacious of the power to remove them at will. Townshend had come prepared to assimilate their tenure to that of their brethren on the English bench. The Irish Parliament had played fast and loose with the Septennial Bill, and in their hearts desired it should never more be heard of. The Cabinet had concluded that it was a measure which ought to be passed. Lord Hertford, before taking leave, had said that he should recommend the change, and the new Viceroy had brought full powers to give it Government support. Here were three considerable reforms, the first of supreme importance, which the Irish patriots, if they were really anxious for their country's good, had an opportunity of securing with the full assent of England. There had been a difference of opinion about the others, or at least how far the Government should take the initiative in proposing them. Townshend met Parliament with the impression that he had been instructed to commend the alteration of the judges' tenure to immediate attention.

The session began on the 20th of October. The speech from the throne was brief, but it contained a distinct mention of this particular point, and it promised

generally and significantly that the King would consent to any other measures which might promote the welfare and prosperity of the country.

Chatham was too ill to attend to business, and even when the intention was good, Irish affairs were carelessly regarded by the rest of the Cabinet. Lord Shelburne considered that the subject had been opened too abruptly; he would have preferred that the Viceroy should have felt his way more cautiously; and he intimated, perhaps by an error of the pen, that the intention was to appoint the Irish judges, not during good behaviour as in England, but for life.<sup>1</sup> The Septennial Bill, if introduced at all, was to be made octennial.

Townshend warmly defended himself. In what he had said about the judges, he maintained that he had rather fallen short of his instructions than exceeded them; and as to a life tenure, places held for life were openly bought and sold in Ireland. He regretted, not, as will be seen, without reason, that he had been unable to mention the Septennial Bill, but he was prepared to encourage it in its new form with all his powers.

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<sup>1</sup> 'We are all astonished to find mention in your speech of your having it in charge from his majesty to recommend a provision to secure the judges in their offices during good behaviour. We approved the measure, but advised you to use general words. You were instructed to talk confidentially of the determination of Government to support the Septennial Bill, and the judges for life. . . We must have the bill for limiting the duration of Parliaments for eight years, instead of seven, to avoid the confusion of a general election in both kingdoms the same year. Shelburne to Townshend, October 29—November 5.' S. P. O.

The Irish politicians were perplexed to know how to behave in their new situation. They had discovered that there were to be no more sinecures and pensions, and they had something real to complain of in the manner in which the lucrative offices of state had been hitherto disposed of out of the country. Their best preferments, treasurerships, vice-treasurerships, commissionerships, were conferred by prime ministers upon their supporters in England, who took the salaries and left the duties to be discharged by deputy,<sup>1</sup> and of high patronage there was little left for them to expect. They had discovered that the point on which the King was most anxious was the augmentation of the army. 'Mankind,' reported the Viceroy, 'judge pretty well how to time their requests.' If members were not to be pensioned, if sinecures were to be abolished, and if their only prizes were to be bestowed in England, something or other must be found to make it worth their while to meet the King's wishes. They found difficulties. They discovered wrongs, real or imaginary. The tenure of judges had been a foremost grievance so long as the change was refused. Now that their wish was complied with, it was treated as of no consequence. They themselves detested the Septennial Bill; but when the speech was silent upon it, they discovered that England was purposely thwarting an important

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<sup>1</sup> At this time the Lord Treasurer of Ireland was the Duke of Devonshire; Rigby and Welbore Ellis were Vice-Treasurers; Wil-

} liam Gerard Hamilton was Chan-
} cellor of the Exchequer; Rigby—
} fortunate man! — was also Irish
} Master of the Rolls.

reform.<sup>1</sup> The Chancellorship was vacant. Lord Bowes had been three months dead. The Cabinet was pausing over his successor. The Irish lawyers had a well-founded suspicion that the most brilliant prize of their profession was again to be given to a stranger.

The Viceroy knew what they meant, and did not expect them to be angels. 'As so large a share,' he wrote to Shelburne, 'of the principal offices and emoluments have not been disposed of in this country, your lordship may think it probable I should hear of these circumstances when the Crown has an object in view. It may prove expedient, when men of first-rate abilities are forming expectations, that I should transmit their wishes.'<sup>2</sup>

Townshend had brought with him the feelings of an Englishman who did not yet understand the country. He had supposed the Irish Parliament had been sincere in their complaint of the Pension List. Their objection had been only to the disposition of a fund in favour of royal bastards, mistresses, and favourites, which they would have preferred to share among themselves. They were about to open his eyes with some rudeness to their real views. He was in the act of recommending the claims of their leaders to Shelburne's consideration when Philip Tisdall, the Attorney-General, came into his room and abruptly told him 'that besides an address on the vacancy of the Great Seal which would probably

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<sup>1</sup> *Baratariana*, page 17.

<sup>2</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, November 15. Secret and separate.'  
S. P. O.

be carried, a motion would be made in the House of Commons, which could not be resisted, for a short Supply Bill.' Here was a reception for a Viceroy who had come to end corruption and malpractices! He called a meeting of the council. The Lords Justices, the Earl of Shannon, and the Speaker, with the most perfect coolness, confirmed Tisdall's words. 'The discontent was so great,' they said, 'that it was impossible to stem the torrent.' The Commons 'considered the refusal of the Money Bill to be the only certain method of obtaining those popular bills which had been so often demanded and so constantly refused.'

The ground of action was more singular than the action itself. The Judges' Tenure Bill had been spontaneously offered. The Septennial Bill had been rather approved than disapproved. It had been postponed hitherto at the desire of the men who in Parliament had affected to demand it. They had but to ask now to have their wishes immediately gratified, and yet Malone, who was out of office, was the only member of council who would say that he thought the passing of a short Supply Bill would be an improper measure.

'I cannot express my surprise,' Townshend said in reporting the scene, 'at finding myself in the midst of the King's servants, and hearing a question of this sort treated by a part of them in this manner, and a day pressed for the consideration of a measure which ought to have been rejected with indignation.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, November 15. Secret and separate.'  
S. P. O.

The real meaning of the opposition was of course evident. A Chancellor had been already chosen, an Englishman as the Irish anticipated, and the Cabinet did not intend to reverse their selection. Hewett, one of the judges of the Court of King's Bench, was coming over with the title of Lord Lifford. 'His known attachment to Revolution principles, great knowledge, and unspotted integrity,' were considered his sufficient recommendation. Lord Shelburne replied to Townshend's unpleasant news, that the King could not but feel 'amazement at such extraordinary behaviour, when he had meant so well.' 'A short Money Bill struck at the very being of Government.' 'The effect could only be the rejection of the Bills which were the pretended object.' 'The public,' Shelburne hoped, 'would soon see through the flimsy pretext of the contrivers, and punish them as they deserved.' 'Altogether it was one of the meanest stratagems which low cunning, narrow parts, and interested motives, could suggest to any set of men in public affairs.' If the Parliament was to continue, however, the hungry expectants must be fed in some way. 'The King,' Shelburne said, 'did not think proper to recede from his resolution with regard to places, pensions, and reversions. Yet his majesty would consider such other just marks of his countenance and protection as at the end of the session might be recommended.' There were still peerages, inferior commissions, and professional offices of various kinds for those who would support the Government against faction.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Shelburne to Townshend, November 24, 1767. Secret.' S. P. O.

The Shannon-Ponsonby party in the Council had exhibited their strength; and were satisfied for the moment with having shown that if Ireland was to be reformed it was not to be at their expense. The opposition to the Money Bill was withdrawn. An adverse motion by Flood on the appointment of Lord Lifford was rejected by a large majority; and the heads of a Septennial or Octennial Bill were passed for transmission to England. This time they were carried to the Castle by the Speaker in the usual form, with the entire House in attendance. An Absentee Tax was revived in the Money Bill—a tax of four shillings in the pound on all pensions, salaries, and profits of employments payable to persons not resident in Ireland. Imposed originally under George the First, it had been accompanied with a power to the Crown to grant exemptions under the sign-manual. The exemptions had been so numerous that the results had proved ‘very inconsiderable.’ ‘The tax bore hard on individuals who most wanted favour, and had not interest to procure it,’ and had been allowed to fall through. It was now replaced without the reservation; the only exceptions permitted being in the case of pensions to the royal family, or to officers who had specially distinguished themselves. To a proposal so definitely just, Townshend offered no opposition, and in private gave it his full approval. The heads of the Judges’ Tenure Bill were passed also, but international jealousy on both sides interfered with its success. It had been drawn on the English precedent, and contained a clause



for the possible removal of the Judges of Ireland 'on the representation of the Privy Council and the Houses of Lords and Commons.' What did Lords and Commons mean? The Irish Parliament claimed the power of removal to themselves exclusively. The Council, who could alter bills before transmission, was induced with difficulty to allow joint authority to the Lords and Commons of England. Townshend, perhaps under instructions from Shelburne, who was still resenting the short Money Bill, desired to secure a separate power over the judges to the English Parliament, whether the Irish Parliament consented or refused. The Council begged him not to insist on an alteration which would be fatal to the measure, and the bill was allowed to go as the Council left it. Had the Irish Parliament behaved decently at the beginning of the session, they could have drawn the heads in their own form, and no difficulty would have been made. As matters stood, there was a probability that the heads of the bill might not be returned to them.<sup>1</sup>

The usual pause now followed. Heads of bills were discussed in the autumn, sent to England to be considered and revised, and on their return, at the beginning of the year, were re-debated, and either passed or rejected. The 'servants of the Crown' took advantage of the recess to clear up their relations with the Viceroy. They had taught him, as they supposed, that he could not govern without them. They desired to make

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, December 28, 1767. Secret and confidential.'

him finally understand the terms on which he might calculate on their support. Lord Shannon, the Speaker, and Mr. Hely Hutchinson requested a private interview, and defined their expectations. Ignorant that the powers of the Lords Justices were henceforth to be no more real than they had become in England, Ponsonby and his son-in-law demanded to have their offices continued to them. Hely Hutchinson was for himself unambitious: he was Prime Sergeant; he had a lucrative practice, and a private fortune independent of it; he asked for some provision for his two sons,<sup>1</sup> either by place or pension, and 'his wife, at the end of the session, to be created a viscountess.' On these terms, and not otherwise, these distinguished persons were prepared to carry Townshend through his parliamentary difficulties, and to defend the supremely important measure which, in the critical temper of the House of Commons, had not yet been brought forward—the augmentation of the army.

Ponsonby and Shannon together commanded a majority in the House. Hely Hutchinson, the Viceroy said, 'was the most powerful man in Parliament, of great abilities to conduct a debate.'<sup>2</sup> Whether a bargain thus unblushingly offered was to be submitted to, he referred to the consideration of the King.

The negotiation could not wholly be kept secret.

<sup>1</sup> Richard, then eleven years old, created afterwards Earl of Donoughmore; and Henry, a year younger, who, as Lord Hutchinson, succeeded Abercrombie in

command of the army in Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, December 2, 1767. Secret and separate.'

It was whispered in the political circles of Dublin. The apostasy of the triumvirate would for a time destroy the party who called themselves the defenders of their country; and Henry Flood and his friends, who as yet lay outside the lines of promotion, and were fired with patriotic indignation, commenced a series of letters in the Dublin journals, in which Ireland appears as Barataria, Townshend as Sancho, and the various members of the Council as officers of his household. Of Ponsonby they had evidently good hopes. He was applauded for his past virtues, but was made to understand that he was on his trial before the country. The Prime Sergeant Rufinus was regarded with deep, and, it must be allowed, deserved, suspicion.<sup>1</sup>

When the mysteries of parliamentary government are hereafter revealed, it will be known how far such overtures form a sample of the methods in which in other countries besides Ireland free institutions can be made to work. Shelburne expressed less surprise than disgust. He complained of the Absentee tax, but let it pass. The Judges' Tenure Bill was rejected. The chance had been thrown away. The augmentation of the army was the essential thing. 'The internal state of Ireland' made an increase of force absolutely necessary; yet it was unendurable to submit to dictation—dictation so gross and unprincipled. 'We cannot recommend the King,' Shelburne said, 'to grant places and pensions for life or years. The leading persons in

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<sup>1</sup> *Baratariana*, letters 1, 2, 3.

Ireland must act as they can answer to their consciences and as representatives of their country. The King will certainly, at the end of the session, take into consideration the merits of those who shall have exerted themselves for the support of his Government and the good of Ireland. Nor can the conduct of those who shall have acted from motives of a less honourable nature escape his majesty's notice.'<sup>1</sup>

Townshend wholly agreed as to the duty of 'the leading persons of Ireland.' The increase of the army was required to keep the peace, and prevent murder and rape, and cattle-houghing. The lords and gentlemen might have been expected to further it for their own sakes. 'But being on the spot,' Townshend said, 'and seeing the general disposition of the House of Commons in its true light, I cannot be so sanguine as to hope that these sentiments are sufficient grounds on which a measure of this sort is to be brought into Parliament, and carried through with success. I know his majesty did not mean to grant more pensions, nor could I give them hopes, though I could not help listening to their proposals. But when I observed how very weak this Government had become, I thought it my duty to submit the matter again to his majesty, being convinced that until the system of government here can be totally changed, and the true weight and interest of the Crown brought back to its former channel, there must be some relaxation of this rule. I am

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<sup>1</sup> 'Shelburne to Townshend, December, 1767.'

sorry, therefore, you feel yourself precluded from recommending anything of this sort to his majesty. I am afraid strict adherence to the rule will at this time be a great prejudice to his majesty's service.'<sup>1</sup>

The applicants for corruption received their answer.

1768 They enquired whether the augmentation was to be pressed. They were informed that it would be pressed. Hutchinson, speaking for the others, declared coolly that Shannon and Ponsonby would oppose, that without them it could not be carried, and that every art would be used to prejudice the people against a measure which would be represented as a conspiracy against their liberties. Even yet unable to realize the character of Irish politicians, the Viceroy appealed to the Privy Council, and in the most serious language entreated them to remember their obligations. Ponsonby answered ambiguously. Hutchinson and the Attorney-General<sup>2</sup> showed that nothing better was to be expected of them. On the re-assembly of the Houses, a hostile motion was introduced by Pery for a committee to enquire into the state of the army, and was allowed to pass unresisted. The Viceroy remonstrated again with Lord Shannon. Lord Shannon let him see that the proposed conditions must be conceded. 'You will see,' Townshend wrote, 'that those who offered to assist under such terms as upon due consideration were rejected, have gone into determined opposition to the King's Government itself. What shall I

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, January 3, 1768. Secret.'

<sup>2</sup> Tisdall.

do? Shall I apply to those who are generally in opposition, and are called the independent gentry of this country? Shall I prorogue? I doubt whether any other course will prevent things from being carried to lengths that we shall not hereafter be able to remedy.'<sup>1</sup>

The situation was too intricate to be decided from England. The true answer should have been the dismissal of a body in whom patriotic feeling was smothered in self-interest, and the restoration of order and security by a stringent police. It was an answer, however, which England, with her iniquitous trade laws, her scandalous misappropriation of Irish offices, her long contemptuous neglect of every duty which a ruling country owed to an annexed dependency, was in no condition to give. Shelburne left Townshend to his own judgment, merely saying, that neither the King nor the Cabinet 'had any predilection for any man or set of men, having nothing else in view than to conduct the King's affairs honourably and safely. If the business could be carried on by the men at present in office, they would prefer that there should be no change. If the King's servants refused to give solid support, the Viceroy might send for the independent gentlemen. If the House of Commons persisted in passing offensive measures, the Cabinet were unanimously of opinion that he should prorogue.'<sup>2</sup>

Meantime the Septennial Bill returned, changed only to Octennial, for the reasons given before by Lord

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, January 26. Secret.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Shelburne to Townshend, February 10, 1768.'

Shelburne. The agitators, though they knew that the Bill was coming back to them, had professed to believe that it would be again rejected. A motion had been proposed, which Flood noisily supported, that he, with Lucas and William Ponsonby,<sup>1</sup> should cross to England and demand it at the 'Council doors. Hutchinson, to clear himself of suspicion of want of patriotism, had spoken violently against the augmentation of the army, and had proposed an Irish militia instead. Others, with characteristic impudence, renewed their clamours against the Pension List. The appearance of the Octennial Bill shamed these passionate gentlemen for the moment into something like silence. The Viceroy had taken advantage quietly of the feud between the Fitzgeralds and the Ponsonbies to pay court to the Duke of Leinster. The Duke came to his support, and carried with him many of the country gentlemen.<sup>2</sup> The threatened committee of enquiry was dropped. The House voted an address of thanks for the Octennial Bill; and if the army question could be got over, the session, after all, might come to a quiet end.

<sup>1</sup> The Speaker's eldest son.

<sup>2</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, February 16.' A curious fear had been expressed by the independent members that if they voted for the Army Bill, 'the weight of the Crown would be exerted against them hereafter by those whose designs they would now defeat by the support of the Government.' They feared, that is, that Lord Shannon and the Speaker would continue

Lords Justices when Townshend went back to England, and they would be left at their mercy. It was the same complaint, in another form, which the loyal gentlemen of the Pale used to make to the ministers of Henry VIII. If they supported an English Viceroy against the Irish clans, the Government, sooner or later, would tire of its efforts, and leave them to be destroyed by the Geraldines.

The passing of the Octennial Bill would be followed immediately by a general election. Suspicions had been deliberately excited among the people that the Government had sinister intentions in desiring to add to the troops; and Townshend's best friends advised him to postpone so critical a subject as the augmentation of the army to another session. Townshend himself was strongly of the same opinion. He sent his secretary, Lord Frederick Campbell, to London, to endeavour to persuade the Cabinet. As a matter of party management, he was probably right. But the shameful anarchy which ruled undisturbed in so many parts of the country had shocked the King too deeply to allow him to listen. Come what would, there should be an end to murder and brigandage. Shelburne ordered Townshend to persevere at all risks, and to assure the independent members that their services should be remembered, if they stood by him in beating down an opposition which was the more abominable from the affectation of patriotism in which it was disguised.<sup>1</sup>

Townshend by this time understood Ireland. He complied, but he guessed what would follow. On the 19th of April a message was sent to the Commons in the name of the Crown, that three thousand additional soldiers were required for the defence of the country; the Absentee Tax would suffice to meet the expense, and no fresh burden would be thrown upon the people; his majesty, therefore, confidently relied on the willing

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<sup>1</sup> 'Shelburne to Townshend, March 14.' S. P. O.



consent of the Irish legislature. The oligarchy had committed themselves too deeply to retract. If they yielded, their power was at an end. The usual cries were raised of Ireland's liberty being in danger. Shannon, Ponsonby, Tisdall, Hutchinson, in public and private, by themselves and their friends, played on the childish passions of the Irish people. In a full House, on the motion of the brilliant enthusiast, who aspired to be Ireland's champion, Mr Flood, the Government was defeated.

The struggle was for life and death. England was too apt to forget her Irish friends, especially when their efforts were unsuccessful. Townshend thought it necessary to remind the Cabinet immediately that they must keep their promises to those who had stood by him, and who would otherwise be sacrificed to the resentment of the coalition. He considered for a week before he could decide on the course which it would now be desirable to follow.

'When the King,' he wrote at length to Shelburne, 'comes to reflect on certain passages in my letters to your lordship, his majesty can be no stranger to the scandalous causes of the late miscarriage. It was clearly made out that so far from any additional vote of credit being needed, the money already voted would be sufficient till Parliament should meet again to answer the whole expense of the estimates. . . . You must now be convinced on what grounds many of the leading interests of this kingdom have hitherto undertaken to carry on his majesty's affairs; and why, when diffi-

culties have arisen, or have been artificially created, Government has generally been defeated by its own strength. . . . The most effectual means to restore vigour to the Government would be to keep Ireland under the constant attention of a resident governor in whose hands should be placed the absolute disposal of the several offices of revenue. The commissioners exercise great weight over the officers under them, for whose conduct on this occasion I cannot otherwise account. As this will operate but slowly, however, I should wish to know whether, in the different branches of his majesty's service, some persons ought not to be immediately marked as particular objects of displeasure. Many distinguished persons have supported us through the session without hinting at any consideration : though their judgment was against pressing the Augmentation Bill, they yet hazarded their elections in supporting it. I am not without hope that when it shall be observed that his majesty's disapprobation is strongly shown to the principal opposers of so salutary a measure, the tide of popular resentment will turn against those who have endeavoured to direct it against Government.'<sup>1</sup>

The country was already preparing for a general election. 'Every county and borough was a scene of dissipation and animosity.' Candidates were flying to and fro, bribing, treating, and spouting patriotism and Ireland's rights. French-Irish priests, officers of the Irish Brigade, apostles of anarchy of all sorts were

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, May 10, 1768.'

scenting the approaching battle, coming over in disguise, and 'feeling the pulses of the community.' On all grounds it was desirable to shorten the dangerous period.<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy demanded and obtained permission to bring it to an immediate end. The bills already passed through committee received the royal assent. Parliament was dissolved, and writs were instantly issued for a new election. Five serviceable members of the late House were recommended for peerages and obtained them.<sup>2</sup> Lord Kingston received an earldom, the Viceroy insisting that striking evidence of this kind was necessary to show that the King meant to proportion his rewards to public desert. The Doneraile title was extinct. Two collateral St. Legers were applying for it, both of whom were likely to be elected members of the House of Commons. They were put on their good behaviour for the next session: whichever of them served the Government best should receive the prize.

'This is now the crisis of Irish Government,' wrote Townshend. 'If a system is at this time wisely formed and steadily pursued, his majesty's affairs may hereafter be carried on with ease, dignity, and safety; but if only a few changes are made here and there, and this particular man is to be raised and another depressed, probably to be restored again in a few months, as in

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, May 17, 1768.'

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Dawson was created Lord Dartry; W. H. Dawson, of Queen's County, Lord Dawson; Abraham Crichton Lord Erne; John Eyre, of Eyre Court, Lord Eyre; and Mr. Cosby, of Stradbally, Lord Sydney.

1755,<sup>1</sup> with double powers and weight, it will only add fuel to the fire, and at last bring the King's authority in Ireland, low as it is, into still greater contempt. If the plan which I have proposed shall be adopted, and the King and his servants have that confidence in me as to think I am a fit person to carry it into execution, his majesty will, I hope, allow me by degrees and on proper occasions to submit to him such changes as shall appear to me necessary.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> When Lord Shannon got his peerage.

<sup>2</sup> 'Townshend to Shelburne, May 31, 1768.'

## SECTION II.

NOTWITHSTANDING the dissoluteness of the Dublin work-  
 1769 men, the factiousness of the patriots, and the  
 social disorders which had assumed so menacing  
 an appearance, the material prosperity of Ireland had  
 for twenty years been slowly increasing. The Peace of  
 Aix la Chapelle was the turning point at which, in  
 parts at least of the island, the people began to lay  
 aside their dreams and turn to industry. Even the  
 Whiteboy movement, caused as it had been by the  
 increase of cattle and the rise of rents, was a result and  
 symptom of the upward tendency. The linen manu-  
 facture was growing in Ulster. Intelligent country  
 gentlemen were building houses, planting, draining, and  
 raising green crops. Arthur Young, who travelled  
 through the country in 1771, found universally the  
 term of twenty years defined as that at which the  
 improvement had commenced which was still in pro-  
 gress. The year which followed the dissolution of 1768  
 was the most productive which had been known for a  
 century; and had the state of public opinion permitted  
 England to recognize that a Parliament was at all times  
 a curse to Ireland and not a blessing; could she have  
 perceived at the same time, without waiting to be  
 taught by calamity, the folly and iniquity of her trade  
 laws, the permanent regeneration of Ireland might have  
 dated from that period.

It was not to be. A new Parliament was elected, but it was not called together before the usual period, in the autumn of the following year. The Viceroy used the interval to impress the lesson which he desired Irish politicians to lay to heart. He hoped, though he was far from sanguine, that by straightforward open measures, by the suppression of jobs, by honest administration on the principles which had been laid down by the King, he might find sufficient backing when the legislature reassembled to carry on the business of the State without reverting to the old methods. For a vigorous policy, however, he required the assistance of the Home Government, and the Home Government, as usual, wavered. 'You are to have all the support,' Lord Weymouth wrote to him in the summer of 1769, 'that your known zeal entitles you to, and your own ideas shall be adopted as to the mode of that support, if there is a moral certainty that you will be successful in procuring a majority. Your sketches of the principal characters in this country are drawn with too much coolness and impartiality, and with too genuine an air of truth, to permit us to doubt their correctness. His majesty arms you with full powers to act as you shall think desirable.'<sup>1</sup>

The Viceroy's 'ideas' had been to make a clean sweep of the dishonest members of the Council, and to fill their places with others of whose conscientiousness he had better expectations. To certainty of success

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<sup>1</sup> 'Weymouth to Townshend, June 9, 1769. Most secret.'

he admitted frankly that he could not pretend. He could not confer confidentially with individual members; he could not canvass for support; he could only repeat his opinion, that if the disastrous habit of buying off opposition was fairly abandoned, and if Government was firm in showing that it would support honest men and honest measures, the Shannon and Ponsonby faction would be broken up.

Had Chatham continued at the head of affairs, the bold course might have been adopted. But Chatham was gone, and without Chatham the Cabinet, who were unwisely brave towards the American colonies, had no army to spare to encounter Irish faction. They advised half measures. The false 'servants of the Crown' were, for the present at least, to remain in their places. They were worthless and unprincipled; they were fishing in troubled waters for their own interest; but they might oppose the supplies if they were removed, and the Viceroy was directed to make one more experiment of temporizing. Very unwillingly he submitted, pleading only to be allowed to show open countenance and favour to 'the eminent gentlemen who had supported him in his last trial,' if only to show his majesty's determination that though he was pleased to suffer his servants to remain, the power of the kingdom was not to return to its late channel.

There had been, was, and ever would be, but one way of governing Ireland—by putting authority exclusively into the hands of men of personal probity and tried loyalty to the British connection. Untaught by

unvarying experience, England has persisted from the beginning in the opposite method. She has sought to rule with the support of men by whom it has been a disgrace to be supported, to sacrifice the known and obvious interests of the Irish people to the intrigues of demagogues for whom the horsewhip would have been a fitter reward. From the days of the Earls of Kildare to the days of the modern Upas Tree she has walked in the same footsteps and always to the same goal. She has encouraged the hostility which she hoped to disarm. She has taught those whom she has wished to conciliate that they may defy and insult her with impunity.

Townshend did not dispute his orders, but as the session approached he continued to repeat his opinion that bolder measures would answer better. 'I know from the surest sources,' he wrote to Weymouth in August, 'that there are many gentlemen connected with the Speaker who are waiting only to see whether the English Government will or will not resume its authority.'<sup>1</sup> Late in the month he went on progress in Munster, and paid Lord Shannon a visit at Castle-martyr. Ponsonby was staying there also. They were coldly polite, and evidently intended mischief.

'I assure you,' the Viceroy said, 'there is nothing popular or formidable in these persons or their party. It is the power they derive from the Crown and exercise so fully and largely over this kingdom which subjects the minds of people to them. Neither Lord Shannon

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Weymouth, August 18.'



nor Mr. Ponsonby could preserve even their common provincial influence without their offices. The Octennial Bill gave the first blow to the dominion of aristocracy in this kingdom. It rests with Government to second the good effects of it, and to re-establish its own authority by disarming those who have turned their arms against it. Only let us be firm and resolute, and all right-minded people will come over to us.'<sup>1</sup>

It was not only to reduce the power of the aristocracy in Parliament that the Viceroy was anxious for vigorous action. As Lords Justices, the Speaker and his son-in-law had the supervision of the revenue, and it was calculated that by various forms of peculation as much as 150,000*l.* a year was lost to the Government out of the customs duties. Ponsonby had appointed his friends to the customs offices from highest to lowest, and though never suspected of having himself condescended to fraud, it was thought possible that he had not endangered his political influence by too inconvenient inquisitiveness. In some way or other at any rate large sums were unaccounted for. In this very summer time the Viceroy learnt that a large cargo of tobacco had been seen at a spot where it was deliberately overlooked, and that the cargo of an East Indiaman, on which the duties would have been 13,000*l.*, had been landed surreptitiously at Cork, and that no inquiry had been made. Hertford had received power from the King to remove all officers of all degrees if found unfit for their posts. These

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Weymouth, September 13, 1769. Most secret and separate.'

powers had not been renewed to Townshend. He could not punish the incompetent or dishonest. He could not reward and encourage the good. To the members of Parliament who had been watching how the wind would blow, he could give none of the assurances which they expected, and which he had begged so earnestly to be allowed to hold out. Even Lord Drogheda and Lord Tyrone, who had supported him in the last session under promise of marquises, had their ambition still ungratified, and were 'threatening vengeance.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus it was that when the time came for the new Parliament to meet, the impression prevailed that England was afraid, and that opposition would remain as before—the surest road to promotion and patronage. The Government had been defied, and had ventured a dissolution. But a dissolution had been inevitable, at all events. The insolent 'servants of the Crown' were still in office, and on them and on Irish ideas it was alone safe for those who were making politics their profession to rely. Even the Viceroy himself had been obliged to affect politeness to them. 'I declined coming to extremities,' he sadly said, 'because I have all along observed in your letters a reluctance to any measures that might be thought violent. Things remain, therefore, as they were, both as to men and measures.'<sup>2</sup>

The session began on the 17th of October. Ponsonby was re-elected Speaker without opposition. The speech avoided doubtful subjects, but drew atten-

1769

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Weymouth, October 22, 1769.'

<sup>2</sup> 'To Weymouth, October 17.'

tion to frauds in public departments, which Ponsonby might take to himself, if he chose; 'to clandestine running of goods,' which 'had been carried to great lengths;' and to the imperfect discharge of their duties by the officers of the revenue.<sup>1</sup>

The patriots were eager to try their strength, or to show it, in the new House. The Government was to be informed, as speedily as possible, that they meant to be its masters, and to dictate their own terms. The question on which the Viceroy was most anxious was as before, of course, the augmentation of the army. A motion was made immediately in the committee of supply to consider whether an increase was necessary, and the Government was again defeated by 104 to 72. The first blow was followed instantly by a second. The popular leaders brought up the Pension List, and examined its composition. There, it was but too true, scandalously, shamefully, inexcusably, stood the name of the Countess of Yarmouth, niece of her grace of Kendal, for 4000*l.* a year. There stood Lord Grantham, with 2000*l.* for his own life and his son's; Lord Cholmondeley was there, whose merit was to have been Walpole's son-in-law, for 3500*l.*; Lord Bathurst had 2000*l.*; Lady Waldegrave 800*l.* 81,000*l.* in all was taken from the Irish revenues for these extraordinary

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Young says that in 1771 smuggling had much declined. It is one of the few instances in which this usually exact writer is mistaken. The contraband trade yielded perhaps less extravagant profits, but it was never more active, and ran in so smooth and deep a stream that little was heard of it.

personages by a virtuous Government, whilst honest national patriots were expected to shiver unrewarded; and the highest offices in the Irish service were bestowed equally on English favourites, who did not trouble themselves even to reside and do their duty. The army question came up again in another form. What use did the Crown make already of the sums voted for the defence of the kingdom? Colonel Vallancey reported that all round the coast the fortifications were in ruins. Cork, Waterford, Belfast, Limerick, wealthy and growing cities, were utterly undefended; the guns in the batteries were a hundred years old, and hardly useful as old iron.<sup>1</sup> This, too, was disgracefully certain; and though the repairs would have commenced on Doomsday in the afternoon, if left to the patriots, though the Irish Lords Justices were the persons really responsible for the neglect, none the less it was a telling charge; and the points of it were not lost in the handling. The committee of supply recommended, instead of an increase of the army, a local militia. The Duke of Leinster made up his quarrel with the Speaker, and threw his influence into the opposition, which was now in overwhelming strength; and Flood, Lucas, and Pery were chosen to draw up a Militia Bill. The stream of triumph still bore them on. They passed next to the field on which they had suffered their last reverses in their conflict with England—the origination of their Money Bills. Since their defeat on the appropriation of the surplus,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Commons' Journals, November 16, 1769.'

the Money Bill had been presented to them by the Council, and they had endured it as a perpetual affront.

1769 Their turn was come for revenge. On the 21st of November the motion for the usual supplies was rejected by a large majority, because it had not taken its rise in the House of Commons of Ireland. The Commons did not mean to refuse the grant. They proceeded immediately to draw a bill of their own. But they meant to vindicate their privilege; and lest the Viceroy should attempt to make himself independent of them by falling back on the hereditary revenue, they thwarted measures which he had proposed for a reduction of the expenditure, and they even introduced a motion the effect of which if carried into execution would have largely reduced the fixed and permanent duties.<sup>1</sup> This last step was of so extreme a kind, that the opposition was less unanimous. The friends of Government struggled hard to resist it, and had very nearly succeeded. But this, too, was carried by the casting vote of the Speaker, 'who, to the astonishment of everybody, though himself at the head of the revenue, divided against the Castle.'<sup>2</sup>

Nothing so violent had been seen in the Irish Parliament since the Viceroyalty of Lord Sydney. On that occasion the Viceroy, without even waiting for

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<sup>1</sup> 'The sinking of the hereditary revenue is the great plan of some gentlemen here, and was fought strongly by the servants of the Crown in committee, and afterwards in the House.—Townshend to Weymouth, December 6, 1769.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Townshend to Weymouth, Dec. 6, 1769.' S. P. O.

orders from home, had replied by a prorogation. Lord Sydney's conduct had been fully approved by William's ministers. The Parliament which had defied him was not suffered to re-assemble, and there had been serious thoughts of abolishing the parliamentary constitution.

Townshend had been too feebly supported by the Cabinet to venture on such summary measures on his own responsibility. He was confronted by a combination of all the great Irish houses—the Leinsters, the Shannons, the Ponsonbies, the Beresfords, the Loftuses—who had forgotten their jealousies in the common resolution to maintain the oligarchical constitution.

The catastrophe had come which Townshend had foreseen. The noble lords, he said, 'have unmasked their real sentiments;' 'they have shown they mean to acknowledge as little as possible the superiority of the mother country.' 'Such conduct as they have observed I should despise as a private man; but when marked towards his Majesty's representative, it becomes an object of serious consideration.' 'The constant plan of these men is to possess the government of this country, and to lower the authority of English Government, which must, in the end, destroy the dependence of this country on Great Britain.'

Conciliation had borne its natural fruits. The coercive method was now to be fallen back upon at increased disadvantage. Much of the revenue had been wasted on public works or jobs. This might be saved at once. If, by good management and a more careful collection of the fixed customs and excise, the expenditure

could be brought within the hereditary revenue, the Cabinet directed Townshend to dissolve the Parliament, and terminate the childish farce by governing without one.

It appeared on examination, that if the expenses were pared down to the limits of what was barely necessary, there would remain an annual deficiency of no more than 34,000*l.* When the additional duties were no longer voted, prices would fall, consumption would increase, smuggling and private distilling would cease to be profitable, and the hereditary revenue would probably rise. Even if the establishment were carried on upon the present scale, with the Pension List included, the yearly excess need not be more than 260,000*l.* The experiment might at least be carried as far as to show the agitators that England was not at their mercy.

Townshend summoned the Council, in which Ponsonby, Shannon, and the Prime Sergeant continued to sit; and he told them that after the last vote of the House of Commons, he should so far follow the precedent of Lord Sydney as to protest, and to insist on the entry of his protest in the journals.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The wrong which Ireland conceived itself to suffer about its Money Bills was only appreciable by the Nationalist imagination. The patriots did not deny that the Privy Council had a right to originate a Money Bill. They denied only that it fell within the provisions of Poyning's Act, and that the Council had the *exclusive* right. They claimed that the House of Commons had a right of origination *also*; and they professed to mean no more than that, of two methods equally legal, they preferred their own. Their real aspiration probably was to be rid of Poyning's Act altogether; but this they could not

By skilful diplomacy, by social attentions, by the brilliant hospitality of the Castle, by the combined powers of integrity of general purpose, and flexibility of scruple, on the means by which that purpose was to be obtained, the adroit Lord-Lieutenant had in some degree overcome the opposition in the Council itself. Hely

venture to avow except under a veil of satire. In the height of the tumult there appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* "The Hibernian Courtier's Creed," signed by Athanasius Secundus:—

"Whosoever would be an Hibernian Courtier, it is necessary, before all mental endowments, that he expound rightly the law of Poynings, as explained by the 4th and 5th chapters of Philip and Mary.

"Which law, unless he keeps pure and unmixed with any rational interpretation, he cannot enjoy place or pension, neither shall he receive concordatum in this kingdom.

"Now, the true construction of Poynings' Act is that four different branches of the Legislature are always acknowledged in our Irish Privy Council, continually subsisting.

"For in the enacting of every law the King hath a deliberative voice; the Lords have a deliberative; the Commons have a deliberative; and the Privy Council have a deliberative.

"The King hath a negative voice, the Lords have a negative,

the Commons have a negative, and the Council a negative.

"And yet there are not four deliberatives nor four negatives, but one deliberative and one negative, frequently exercised against King, Lords, and Commons, by his majesty's most honourable Privy Council.

"Further, it is essential to the preservation of his present place, and to his further hopes of preferment, that he conceive just ideas of the origination of Money Bills.

"His interest will thus ever oblige him to confess that all benevolences are free gifts from the people; and constitutionally take their rise in an assembly neither made, nor created by, nor proceeding from the people.

"This is the Hibernian Courtier's political faith, to which whosoever inviolably adheres shall be rewarded with a masked pension for himself, and a fancy ball, without masks, for his wives and daughters.

"And for all those who reject the foregoing liberal explanation, there shall be protests, prorogations, partial sheriffs, packed juries, and influenced electors to their lives' end."—*Baratariana*, p. 99.



Hutchinson had been bought at a lower price than he had set upon his services, for his wife had still to wait for her peerage. Tisdall, the Attorney-General, had been gained over. Anthony Malone had taken the Viceroy's side from the first. These gentlemen were now prepared to a certain extent to support Government. They expressed proper regret at the behaviour of the House of Commons. As the protest would be received with ill humour, they advised as a further step an immediate prorogation. One thing, however, they would not do; they refused unanimously to assist in reducing the expenditure to the level of the hereditary revenue. 'They were all unwilling,' the Viceroy wrote, 'that the hereditary revenue should be thought sufficient, and therefore said everything that could prevent that experiment from being tried.'<sup>1</sup>

That an attempt might be made to govern without a Parliament the House of Commons had already anticipated. That it was deliberately in contemplation, being acknowledged in Council, was of course whispered about. Public feeling caught alarm. Dublin fell into a fever fit of patriotic enthusiasm; the House of Commons was the idol of the hour, the defender of Ireland's liberties; the emotions may be conceived, therefore, with which at this crisis a paragraph was received which had just appeared in the *London Daily Advertiser*, telling the patriots how they were regarded in that malignant country which was the cause of all their woes.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Weymouth, December 11, 1769.'

On the 18th of December a motion was made in the House of Commons that a paragraph be read from Mr. Woodfall's Paper of the 9th, relating to the votes on the Money Bill. The Paper was produced. The clerk rose and read—

'Hibernian patriotism is a transcript of that filthy idol which is worshipped at the London Tavern. Insolence assumed from an opinion of impunity usurps the place which boldness against real injuries ought to hold. The refusal of the late Bill of Supply because it was not brought in contrary to the practice of ages, in violation of the constitution and to the certain ruin of the dependence of Ireland on Great Britain, is a kind of behaviour more suiting to an army of Whiteboys than the grave representatives of a nation. This is the most daring insult that has been hitherto offered to Government. It must be counteracted with firmness, or else the State is ruined. Let the refractory House be dissolved. If the same spirit of seditious obstinacy should continue, I know no remedy but one. The Parliament of Great Britain is supreme over its conquests as well as its colonies, and the service of the nation must not be left undone on account of the factious obstinacy of a Provincial Assembly. Let our Legislature, for they have the undoubted right, vote the Irish supplies, and save a nation that their own obstinate representatives endeavour to ruin.'

It was come to this then. Not only were they to be governed without a Parliament, by the hereditary revenue, but taxes were to be imposed on them at the

will and pleasure of the Legislature of Great Britain. Already from across the Atlantic were coming sounds of the approaching battle for colonial freedom. The wrongs of which America had to complain were but mosquito bites by the side of the enormous injuries which had been inflicted by English selfishness on the trade and manufactures of Ireland. Why was Ireland to submit when America was winning admiration by resistance? Why, indeed? save that America was in earnest. The Irish were not. America meant to fight. The Irish meant only to clamour and to threaten to fight. The American leaders, rightly or wrongly, were working for the benefit of the whole population of the colonies. The Irish leaders were using the wrongs of their country as a means of forcing England to bribe them into connivance. Had the Irish at any period of their history aspired to any noble freedom, they would have fought for it as the Scotch fought at far greater disadvantage. They expected to obtain the privileges which are the only prize of the brave and noble, by eloquence and chicanery. They desired those privileges only to convert them into personal profit; and when the hard truth was spoken to them, they screamed like hysterical girls.

A resolution was carried instantly without a dissentient voice, that the paragraph which they had heard 'was a daring invasion of the rights of Parliament,' and 'was calculated to create groundless jealousy between the subjects of the two kingdoms.' The offending paper was burnt on College Green before the doors of

the House by the hangman, the sheriff and javelin-men attending in state at the execution. Flood and Pery moved that the Viceroy be questioned on his intentions. The House agreed, and their temper was not mended by Townshend's answer. 'He did not think himself authorized, he said, to disclose his majesty's instructions till he had received his majesty's commands for so doing.'<sup>1</sup>

A middle course was now impossible; at all risks the servants of the Crown, who were the real instigators of the action of the House, must be taught that they had passed the limits of forbearance. On the 23rd the Viceroy wrote for permission to remove Lord Shannon, the Speaker, and five other lords and gentlemen from the Privy Council, and from the offices which they held under the Crown.<sup>2</sup> A 'most secret' letter of the same date reiterates his reasons for requesting it.

'Mr. Ponsonby must be displaced from the head of the Revenue Board. I need not dwell upon his conduct while the marks are so recent and decisive. The authority of the Crown in this country can never be maintained while this gentleman holds his present powers. If we dissolve Parliament he will canvass for the chair of the next, with the whole power and authority of his office, and we must see to prevent him. Lord Lanesborough's friends have gone against us, and he was under the greatest obligations to the Crown. Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, December 21, 1769. | Lanesborough, Sir William Mayne,  
| Sir Hercules Langford Rowley,

<sup>2</sup> The Earls of Louth and | and Sir William Fownes.

Champneys was placed on the establishment for 1000*l.* a year, to open a seat for his lordship at the Revenue Board. To make the revenue produce what it ought, one or two members of the board must be Englishmen, always resident, regularly bred in the revenue of England, men of sense, spirit, and honour, who could be depended on to do their duty themselves and prevent others from abusing theirs. Lord Shannon must be removed from the Ordnance, and the inferior board must be changed also. The principal share of the power and influence of those parties which have so long embarrassed Government was owing to the favour as well as forbearance of the Crown under which they have been cherished; while by a constant private understanding with its declared opponents, they have distressed one Lord-Lieutenant, compromised with another, always gaining something for themselves, and paring away the authority and reputation of the English Government until it has scarce ground left to stand upon. Members of the House of Commons have been watching to see where the power would finally reside. I earnestly recommend these changes, and such a regulation of the revenue as shall tend to its improvement and the support of the Government. Lose no time. The same cabals, the same demands, intrigues, and pretended patriotism will revive. Government must begin from this moment to extricate itself from this dilemma or must submit.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Weymouth, December 23.' Abridged.

The Parliament was allowed one more opportunity of repentance. Half alarmed at their own audacity, the factious members had consented after all to the augmentation of the army. Part of the supplies had been voted under forms not included in the bill which they had thrown out. The necessary business was wound up at Christmas, and the royal assent was given to the Acts which had already been passed. The Viceroy, on the 26th, addressed the two Houses. He told them with painful plainness the light in which he regarded them and their doings; and then, as Lord Sydney had done, and as he had given notice that he himself intended to do, he submitted a distinct protest against the claims which they had advanced, and required them to enter it on the Journals. The Peers consented, five only objecting and recording the grounds of their disagreement.<sup>1</sup> The Commons, too proud to yield further, and aware, like the Viceroy, that it was a crisis in the constitution, when to give way was to allow themselves defeated, positively refused. Townshend, on his side, was firm. Had they complied, they would have separated for the fortnight's recess and have re-assembled in January. They were prorogued nominally till the 20th of March, but in fact, as they all knew, for an indefinite time.

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<sup>1</sup> Louth, Charlemont, Powerscourt, Longford, and Mountmorris.

## SECTION III.

Two courses were now open to the Cabinet, and two only. The behaviour of the House of Commons, <sup>1770</sup> notoriously consequent as it was on the rejection of the first overtures of Lord Shannon and Mr. Ponsonby to the Viceroy, must have satisfied the most obstinate believer in Parliamentary Government that Ireland in the existing circumstances was not fit for it. Free constitutions presuppose in the leading citizens of a country at least some degree of probity and patriotism. When the ambition of individuals never reaches beyond personal interest, when their consciences recognize no obligation beyond duty to themselves and their friends, the forms of liberty are travestied, and the sooner the truth is recognized and acted on the better for all parties concerned. Townshend had been sent to Ireland to put an end to jobbery, to clear away the scandals of generations, and to begin a new era. He had been foiled by the inveterate dishonesty of the principal Irish politicians, nor was there the slightest hope of finding in the Irish representatives the materials of an honourable party on whose support he could rely. The facts of the case being undeniably thus, the Viceroy might have been left to select a council from the many honest and loyal men who had held aloof hitherto from the unwholesome atmosphere of Parliament; and with their help, and with economic management of the

hereditary revenue, he might have enforced order, punished fraud and swindling, and opened the way by a just administration towards a future union with Great Britain. The honest course would in the end have proved the safest. It would have involved sacrifices, however, on the part of England. If integrity and justice were to be the rule of Government, precept would have to be attended by example. The Cabinet could not any longer abuse Irish patronage to purchase Parliamentary support at home, or quarter favourites on the Irish establishment whom elsewhere they dared not recommend. The English statesmen of the eighteenth century, the Graftons, the Weymouths, the Norths, the Shelburnes, had learnt in official routine to regard these resources as indispensable for the public service. They were incapable, perhaps, from habit and training, of breaking in upon established precedent. There was another way of governing Ireland: it was also possible to fall in with the national ideas, to maintain the Parliament as a form, but to manage it through and by the corruptions which it loved; to dissolve the old parties, and to form instead a new combination which should be held together by dependence upon the Castle.

Of the alternative policies this unhappily was the one on which the Cabinet resolved, and Townshend remained in Ireland to become the most unwilling instrument in carrying it out. He set himself to the work of seduction with all the arts which he possessed.



The Dublin tradesmen had suffered by the premature dispersion of the Lords and Commons. The Viceroy restored them to good humour by the magnificence of the Castle hospitalities. He gave masquerades; he gave fancy balls, in which the costumes, with a skilful compliment to Ireland, were made only of Irish manufacture. The members of the Opposition sneered, and would have staid away; the wives and daughters refused to exclude themselves from assemblies of which the capital of Ireland had never seen the equal, and forced their husbands and fathers into submission. The gentlemen could not resist the fascination of the Castle dinner parties where the wit was as sparkling as the champagne. Townshend laughed at everything—laughed at the Opposition, laughed at the friends of Government, laughed most of all at himself. With his light good humour he conquered popularity, while more subtly he secured important friends by working substantially upon them below the surface. Hely Hutchinson was attached by a pension<sup>1</sup> which was added to his salary as Prime-Sergeant. Pery was disarmed by similar methods, and the links of the chain were strengthened which held Tisdall. Thus by the time March came, the Viceroy felt himself strong enough to begin the

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<sup>1</sup> Townshend insisted very strongly on the necessity of this pension. 'Nothing,' he said, 'but the unrivalled application and abilities of this gentleman, who is so necessary for the King's service, and to be detached from the great inter- | rests in opposition to Government, could prevail on me to recommend this affair so strongly, by which I think the most useful man in this Parliament will be fully secured.' —'To Weymouth, March 7, 1770. Secret.'

serious part of his business. To gentle seduction, terrors were to be added. The Cabinet had given him the permission which he desired, to deprive the Shannon party of their offices; he had watched his opportunity to deliver the blow, and now it fell. They had believed that finding themselves in difficulties with America, the Cabinet would not venture to punish them. On the 6th of March, Shannon, Lanesborough, and Ponsonby were undeceived by learning from the Viceroy <sup>1770</sup> that the King had no longer occasion for their services. With the chiefs of the Ordnance Board and the Revenue Board all the subordinates and dependents were to follow. The entire departments were to be changed completely to the very last man. The effect was ludicrous. Lord Loftus, another, though less inveterate delinquent, and himself the possessor of a lucrative office, waited in consternation on Townshend, and endeavoured to make his peace. Townshend put him on his good behaviour. If he tripped again into opposition, he was informed that he and all who belonged to him would have to make way for trustier men. All offices at the disposition of the Crown from highest to lowest were to be held thenceforward by persons who would place their votes at the disposition of the Viceroy, and by no others.

The revenue commission had been the scene of the grossest frauds; not only was the whole staff to be replaced, but the number of commissioners was to be increased: Townshend had significantly said that he must have Englishmen among them, men of integrity,

ability, and experience unconnected with Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The patriots looked for an outbreak of indignation at the dismissal of their champions. They were astonished to find that Dublin cared nothing after all for the oligarchy with whom they had identified themselves. The Opposition majority disintegrated so rapidly, that the Viceroy almost contemplated the recall of the Parliament. 'No servants of the Crown,' he said, 'had ever fallen less regretted.' But he preferred to prolong the suspense to make sure of his ground. 'The consequences of the late measures had not had time to operate fully.' Loftus had promised to behave well. Others would follow if not pressed too hastily. Prorogation, therefore, followed prorogation. The submission of the same Parliament which had been so audaciously defiant would be a greater triumph than the election of another by a dissolution. The noble lords and their friends seeing the game go against them lost their tempers. Flood's eloquence continued to stream through the press, but it fell flat upon Dublin society, which was basking in the sunshine of the Castle; and his invectives read by the light of Townshend's correspondence are absurd to childishness. Sir William Mayne, a favourite of the Duke of Leinster, was among those who had been removed from the Council. He had been one of the

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<sup>1</sup> The addition to the number of revenue commissioners in Ireland by Townshend, striking as it did at the root of an established and lucrative form of peculation, was the subject for many years of the most passionate declamation in the Irish

Parliament. . . By allowing the new commissioners to sit in the House of Commons, he laid himself open to the charge of adding to the number of placemen. . . But his private letters leave no doubt of the real motive for the increase.

most violent of the Opposition members, entirely in consequence of what he had regarded as a personal affront. On Townshend's arrival in Ireland 'Mayne honoured him with his wishes to be chief secretary,' his qualifications being 'that he was one of the most florid, perpetual, and inept orators that ever performed on the Irish or any other stage.'<sup>1</sup> He had not the success which he expected. He then offered to vacate his seat, giving the Viceroy the nomination, if the Viceroy would recommend him for a peerage. 'I own to your lordship,' the Viceroy said in a letter to Weymouth, 'the proposition rather shocked me; it was a long while before I could bring myself to answer it with temper.' Mayne could not have his peerage. He had revenged himself in the usual way, and had now been punished. The Duke of Leinster took his parasite's disgrace as personal to himself. He wrote to Townshend, begging that when the Viceroy erased the name of Sir William Mayne he would erase his own at the same time. Townshend answered courteously that the Viceroy had no authority, as the Duke must be aware, to remove a Privy Councillor by an act of his own. If the Duke was serious, he would, with great concern, 'transmit his application.' In a brief note, characteristic alike of the man, and of the elements in which the young Fitzgeralds were being educated, the Duke repeated his demand 'You are so obliging as to say,' he wrote, 'that if I continue to desire it, you will transmit my letter to be laid before his majesty.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Weymouth, April 28.'

It is the only favour I ever asked of your excellency, and I flatter myself that your excellency will take such steps as are proper to have my request complied with, as it will save me the necessity of doing it myself.'<sup>1</sup>

The Duke, perhaps, expected Townshend to challenge him. He was disappointed. His letter was forwarded to St. James's. Sir George Macartney was instructed to communicate that the request had been complied with; and the Duke closed the singular correspondence by thanking Macartney for the trouble which he had taken, 'particularly as it had prevented him taking an unprecedented step, and perhaps attended with some consequences, which, however, he would have risked, for the ease and satisfaction which he now felt in his mind of being no longer of a board which he once thought most honourable.'

Swimming in a base and sordid element, Townshend, like Cornwallis after him, detested the work in which he was engaged of superseding a corrupt oligarchy by corrupt Prætorians. If England could be persuaded to treat Ireland with real justice, better things might still be possible.

'The general disposition of his majesty's subjects,' he wrote to Lord Weymouth, 'has been tried and found faithful at this crisis. Unagitated by the disappointment of the leading interests, unprejudiced by the insinuations or example of other parts of his majesty's dominions, who solicit them to make a common cause

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Leinster to Lord Townshend, April 23, 1770.' S.P.O.

to distress the Government, they apparently remain at their homes, a distinguished example of loyalty and confidence. Therefore, my lord, I the more readily solicit such indulgences as may appear on better deliberation fitting to be granted to them. I am informed that there is a species of coarse, narrow woollen cloth manufactured in this country, proper for the Spanish and Portuguese markets, and that none of the same quality is manufactured in Great Britain. I submit whether the free exportation of that article might not be given to Ireland, as it would, in some measure, counteract a large bounty given by the French for the importation of wool from the western parts of this kingdom.

‘It seems also but fair to this country, which has been so encouraged to cultivate the linen manufacture, to extend to them the bounty granted last session of Parliament on the exportation of checks, and to take off the heavy duty of 30 per cent. which they now pay on importation, equal to a prohibition; and if a bounty on the exportation of printed linens be granted as a further encouragement to British linen, I should hope it may be thought proper that the same should be extended to Ireland.

‘Follow my advice, and then the sooner Parliament meets the better, lest the country, hitherto affectionate, and contemning the private views of our opponents, when it finds itself punished for its indiscretion, through disappointment should join those whom it at present rejects.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘To Weymouth, September 25, 1770. Most private and secret.’

The favour so modestly requested was but a small instalment of the debt of justice which England really owed. Had it been freely conceded at this time, what mischief might not have been prevented! Political sagacity may be baffled. Political concessions may aggravate the evils they are meant to cure. Justice only never fails. A few years were to pass, and the entire fabric of commercial disabilities was to be swept away from its foundations. But the fall of it was to bring no gratitude, while the memory of the wrong was to remain for ever uneffaced and uneffaceable. The chain was allowed to remain till it was broken by the revolt of the American colonies, and Ireland was to learn the deadly lesson that her real wrongs would receive attention from England only when England was compelled to remember them by fear. North, Weymouth, Shelburne—any one of whom left to his own intelligence would have seen the fitness of instant consent—were deaf to advice. The manufacturing interests in the English Parliament were too powerful. Townshend's advice could not be followed. The bounties of which he spoke were violations even of the miserable compacts to which Ireland's woollen trade had been sacrificed. Ireland was denied the benefit of them; the Viceroy was driven back on the only remedy which remained—of wholesale and systematic bribery; while the essential interests of the island were contemptuously neglected or forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The rise in the price of farm produce had not remedied the poverty of the people, for the landowners and middlemen, when they

The seizure of the Falkland Isles by Spain in the summer of 1770, created a sudden danger of war. Weymouth ordered Townshend to be on his guard. Townshend had to reply that the country was still defenceless, and that if war came, he could not answer for the consequences. The Catholics infinitely exceeded the Protestants in numbers. They were miserable, mutinous, and devoted to their priests. Internal peace depended on 'the submission of the wealthy Roman Catholics to the Government.' As to foreign enemies, 'neither Waterford, Dungannon, nor Youghal could resist a frigate.' 'Cork, the finest harbour in the world, more important to Great Britain than Dublin, was defended only by a miserable battery, called Cove Fort.'<sup>1</sup> 'Common sense and common justice' had been so long forgotten in Ireland, 'that the powers of party obliged the Government to misapply the purses of the people to private purposes.' 'An absurd terror had been inculcated, that every useful military work, wherever

were not held in check by the Whiteboys, had secured the profit to themselves. Townshend was no more of a sentimentalist than English statesmen are apt to be, yet he summed up one of his descriptive letters by saying:—'In short, my lord, the distress of this people is very great. I hope to be excused for representing to his majesty the miserable situation of the lower ranks of his subjects in this kingdom. What from the rapaciousness of their unfeeling landlords and the restrictions on their trade,

they are among the most wretched people on earth.'—'To Weymouth, November 23.'

<sup>1</sup> Townshend himself examined Cork. 'It must,' he says, 'be a matter of curious speculation to whoever traces the old works about the harbour, to observe how much abler were the engineers in the years 1602 and 1644, when Lord Mountjoy and Prince Rupert commanded in this country. Dugnose and Ramhead were better positions than the job at the Cove.'—'To Weymouth, October 16.'



placed, was intended more against the liberties of the people than against the views of a restless enemy, in constant correspondence with the restless and bigoted inhabitants of their own religion.'<sup>1</sup> Every Government work was jobbed 'to gratify individuals whose political power was irresistible.' Barracks were placed where soldiers would be of least service. Outlying posts had been destroyed which had held the peasantry in check, and the regiments removed to towns where the officers learnt or practised Irish vices, and the men forgot their discipline in whisky shops.

Of the condition of the army there had been recently a very painful illustration. Major Wrixon, who was with a battalion at Limerick, had carried off a young lady from her parents' house by force, and had kept her with him in the barracks. He was tried by court-martial, and cashiered. The court, however, memorialized the Crown in his favour, on the ground

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<sup>1</sup> Townshend confirms the evidence which came out on the late Whiteboy trials as to the temper of the Catholics of the South:—

'The remains of the old Popish clans keep up a constant correspondence with France and Spain, for smuggling, for recruits, and for our deserters. They are a very lawless people, mostly armed, frequently forming themselves into banditti, defying law and magistrates, and committing the greatest outrages. The troops are called for to secure common execution of

criminals. French vessels frequent the coasts, and the great supply of foreign goods into the south of the kingdom is by means of these people. It is amazing that all the posts of troops which King William established in the country to civilize the people should have been removed to the corporations in the interior, and those parts left in as uncivilized and dangerous a state as at that period. When the mountains are occupied the revenue will be increased forty or fifty thousand a year.' —To Weymouth, October 16, 1770.

that Major Wrixon's dismissal from the service would distress his sister!

At Rathdowney, in Queen's County, there had been a scene no less characteristic. The Viceroy had reported that 'there was a wild ungovernable disposition in the people of many parts of the kingdom, which neither the common law nor the civil magistrates were able to restrain.' The military had to be called in at Rathdowney, but the military power was as little to be trusted as the civil power was inadequate. A sergeant's guard went into the town on market-day, apparently to buy provisions. Other privates of the regiment at the station followed them, and, with no discoverable provocation, 'fell promiscuously on the inhabitants, wounding some and killing others.' Not an officer was to be found in the place but the quartermaster. It was proved to be the practice of the officers everywhere to 'appear in quarters for a day, sign the returns, and then absent themselves till the next return.'

Townshend hurried to the spot, and ordered the troops to be paraded without arms. Those of the rioters who could be identified were handed over to the civil authorities. The rest were marched to Dublin, and tried by a general court-martial. The officers were charged with being absent from duty without leave. They were found guilty, and dismissed the service; but, like Major Wrixon, were recommended to mercy. With such troops, such officers, and such court-martials, the Viceroy did not find his task more easy of defending the augmentation of the army. He refused to listen to

the memorial. In both instances the sentences were carried out. But here, too, the evil could be traced to the common source of all the disorders in the country. 'The necessity of yielding to powerful parliamentary interests had been the great source of the indiscipline of the army.'

## SECTION IV.

THE public departments had been re-organized. The dependents of the Boyles and the Ponsonbies had vanished with their chiefs. The Customs <sup>1771</sup> and Excise boards had been re-filled by new members, who could be relied on to refuse to countenance dishonesty, and whose votes could be depended on in a parliamentary division. The great Loftus interest had been brought into obedience, and the support of the independent members, who had held aloof in the last session, had been secured by the only means which were capable of attaching them. It was said afterwards by Lord Clare, that half a million in all was the price which they had placed upon their services. At length, in the spring of 1771, the Viceroy found himself once more prepared to meet the Parliament, without fear of the renewal of the scenes of the late session. The lowest calculation of the numbers at the disposition of Government promised a majority of at least twenty in the same House and among the same men who, eighteen months before, were half prepared to declare the independence of Ireland. Lord Townshend's instructions were not to re-open old sores, or to require a recall of the hostile resolution. His protest had sufficed. He was now to conciliate, to hold out hopes that the King would 'co-operate' in relieving Irish distress; and to show 'that it would be owing solely

to the rashness and folly of the Opposition if they and their fellow-subjects were deprived of those advantages.'<sup>1</sup>

Once more, on the 24th of February, the Viceroy encountered the lords and gentlemen who had sworn to drive him from Ireland. Without referring to past differences, he told them that he had the truest satisfaction in obeying his majesty's commands to meet them again. Knowing something, perhaps, of what had happened in the interval, but ignorant how far the methods employed had been successful, the Opposition declared war upon the instant, and an address was moved by the younger Ponsonby, in which the usual compliments to the Lord-Lieutenant were pointedly omitted. An amendment was proposed to replace the customary words.<sup>2</sup> A debate followed, which lasted till midnight, and the fatal truth was then revealed in the division, that the power of the Ponsonbies had passed from them. They were defeated by 132 to 107. Their own arms had been turned against them. By the control of the public purse they had hitherto secured a monopoly of power. Place, pension, promotion, all pleasant things which Irish politicians entered Parliament to gain, were thenceforward to be the reward of the faithful servants of the Castle, and of no others. Though recovered by the most questionable means, the authority of the Crown was restored to its visible representative.

The defeated families had been adroit enough to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Rochford to Townshend, February 9, 1771.' | thanks to his majesty for continuing his excellency Lord Townshend

<sup>2</sup> 'To return our most humble | in the government of this kingdom.'

represent their cause as the cause of Ireland. In return for the support of the patriots against the Viceroy they had themselves adopted the patriot cries; and when it was plain that Parliament had deserted them, they were taken up as martyrs by the people. A furious mob assembled the next day at College Green. Loftus was pelted and insulted; suspected members of the Lower House were caught, and oaths of fidelity to Ireland were thrust into their mouths. The troops were called out to disperse the rioters, and remained on guard at the gates when the business of the morning commenced. Flood started to his feet with a complaint that freedom was in danger from the presence of an armed force. He moved a resolution that the House was being over-awed. Out of a hundred and fifty members, fifty-one only supported him. Still unable to realize what had happened, he returned to the subject on which before he had achieved so splendid a triumph. He moved that it was necessary to declare the undoubted privilege of the Commons to originate the Money Bills. Here, too, his strength had vanished. He forced a division, and Townshend's new allies were true to their engagements. Flood's motion was lost by 128 to 105.

But humiliation so direct was naturally painful. The Viceroy had desired to spare his new supporters, and was willing to allow them to soothe their self-respect by a show of consistency. Sexton Pery moved, as a paragraph in the address, that 'while the Commons were incapable of attempting anything against the

rights of the Crown, they were tenacious of the honour of being the first movers in granting supplies; and they besought his majesty not to construe their zeal into an invasion of his authority.' To Townshend, Pery represented his motion as an apology and admission of fault. Townshend saw that it was an indirect assertion of the disputed right. He did not himself quarrel with the words; but the King, at his advice, made a marked allusion to them in his reply; and the Commons, by inserting the reply in the Journals, without comment or objection, accepted and submitted to the implied reproof.<sup>1</sup>

The address to the Crown being agreed upon, there followed next the address to the Lord-Lieutenant, the double ceremony being invariably observed. The Opposition saw that it would be hopeless to resist. The address to Townshend was passed, and the duty of presenting it fell to Ponsonby as Speaker. It was too much for him. Driven off the field, utterly and finally defeated, he could not be the person to place the laurel-wreath on the brows of his conqueror. 'He had desired,' he said, in conveying to the House his resignation of the chair, 'to preserve and transmit to his successor the rights and privileges of the Commons of Ireland. In the last session it had pleased the Lord-Lieutenant to accuse the Commons of a great crime.

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<sup>1</sup> 'His majesty is well pleased with the assurance given by the House of Commons of their regard for his rights, and those of the Crown of Great Britain, which it is his indispensable duty to assert, and which he will ever think it incumbent on him to maintain.'

In the present session it had pleased the Commons to take the first opportunity of testifying their approbation of his excellency by voting him an address of thanks. Respect for their privileges prevented him from being the instrument of delivering such address, and he must request them to elect another Speaker.'<sup>1</sup>

He, perhaps, hoped his resignation would not be accepted. The Government, in fact, narrowly escaped defeat upon it. Sir George Macartney proposed Sexton Pery. The elder Fitzgibbon seconded him. Pery's election in a full House was carried only by a majority of four.<sup>2</sup> Ponsonby had a vote of thanks for his past services, and the House, its interests being no longer absorbed in quarrelling with the Viceroy, addressed itself to practical business. Heads of bills were drawn for the encouragement of agriculture, for the repression of trade combinations, for the determination of wages and hours of work. Drunkenness was increasing annually. A bill was devised to prevent corn from being wasted on whisky-making; while Townshend, eager on his side to encourage the Irish in any useful exertion,

<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, March 4, 1771.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Tyrone wanted his brother, Mr. John Beresford, to be chosen. Beresford had been already nominated chief of the new commissioners of the Revenue. 'The envy,' said the Viceroy, 'which would have followed a young man so likely soon to be at the head of the Revenue, holding the chair at the same time,

the effect it would have had on the first families and friends to Government, and the revival of an idea that English Government would again fall into the hands of contractors, was so strong that I was obliged to urge Lord Tyrone to withdraw his brother. He did so in the handsomest manner, and supported Mr. Pery.'—Townshend to Rochford, March 11.



again pressed on the Home Government the unfairness of giving bounties to the Manchester manufacturers, in the teeth of the linen compact, and pleaded either that the bounty should be withdrawn, or Ireland be allowed to share it.<sup>1</sup>

It might have been expected by the least sanguine of Ireland's real friends, that when the Parliament had at last settled to real work, England would have given it some encouragement. England had made herself responsible for Ireland by forcibly annexing it to the empire. She had completely, if scandalously, recovered her constitutional authority. We find, with a feeling approaching indignation, that she at once dismissed the wretched country out of her mind, and relapsed into selfish indifference. Not only was Townshend's caution on the linen compact again neglected, the bounties maintained in favour of Manchester and refused to Belfast, but even the heads of the Agricultural Bill were rejected, because it would add to the expenditure. The Whisky Bill was rejected, because the Treasury could not spare a few thousand pounds which were levied upon drunkenness.<sup>2</sup> The alteration in the Judges' Tenure, which Townshend had promised, had been lost through faction and misunderstanding. The House expected that these matters would now

<sup>1</sup> 'To Rochford, March 24.'

<sup>2</sup> The Viceroy was not to blame. In transmitting the heads of the proposed Act, he said the whisky shops were ruining the peasantry and the workmen. There was an

earnest and general desire to limit them. 'It will be a loss to the revenue,' he admitted, 'but it is a very popular bill, and will give general content and satisfaction throughout the kingdom.'

receive attention, but they expected in vain. A prudent Government would have remembered that corruption is as dishonourable to those who employ it as to those who yield to it; would have endeavoured to atone for its own share in that bad transaction, and to reconcile the purchased majority to their shame, by at least assisting them to confer solid benefits on their country. The session did not end without a significant expression of regret for the lost opportunity. Thanks were proposed to the Viceroy for his just and prudent administration. A sarcastic substitute, proposed by a hot member of the Opposition, fell unseconded.<sup>1</sup> An amendment to expunge the words 'just and prudent' found fifty supporters.

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\* 'Proposed to give the Viceroy our special thanks for having obtained for this country a law securing judges in their offices and appointments during good behaviour, in pursuance of his excellency's promise; for the returning of the law for the restraining of the distilleries; for the expected alteration of other laws; for the rise in the value of lands.'—*Commons' Journals*, May 16, 1771.

## SECTION V.

CORRUPTION unredeemed by integrity of purpose becomes an expensive process. The more complete the  
 1771 shame, the higher the price that must be paid for it. The Dublin press was free, and Loftus, Tyrone, Tisdall, Hutchinson, and the other apostates from the patriot band, were held up weekly in the *Freeman's Journal* to public scorn. Back stairs Castle scandals, as false, most of them, as the general conception which the patriots had formed of Lord Townshend, were the daily amusement of the coffee-houses. Had the recovered influence of Government shown itself in active measures for the relief of the people, the ignorance would have been less bitter. When nothing of this kind appeared, the Viceroy found himself beset with demands which he dared not refuse, lest he should imperil all that he had gained. Viscounts who had sons and nephews in the Lower House wanted earldoms. Barons wanted to be viscounts, Commons to be barons. Patrons of boroughs required promotions in the army for their friends; sinecures and offices in remainder for themselves and their families. The really important reform which had been carried out in the Ordnance and Revenue departments added to the difficulties. The Viceroy had made a deadly enemy of every man who had filled his pockets under the old system. The increase expected from the change in the hereditary

revenue had offended the old politicians, who desired to keep the Government dependent.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Beresford, who was to succeed Ponsonby as head commissioner, was dissatisfied to find that he was not to succeed to Ponsonby's patronage. Sir William Osborne was displeased at being passed over in Beresford's favour. The Earl of Tyrone asked for a marquis's coronet, and could not have it. The promotion of his second brother was an inadequate compensation. Another brother, William Beresford, had married old Fitzgibbon's daughter. Tyrone applied for a bishopric for him. He was but twenty-eight years old, and the request being refused, Fitzgibbon conceived himself affronted as well. The price of dishonour was raised so high that the income and patronage of England would not have satisfied all the claimants; and as England would give nothing except rewards for political service, the Viceroy was in a bad position.

Money was wanted. No supplies had been asked for in the spring, and Parliament re-assembled on the 8th of October. The patriots were in spirits again. The address was fought through once more, para-<sup>1771</sup>graph by paragraph. Lord Kildare moved that 'we lament that we cannot enumerate among our blessings the continuance of Lord Townshend in the government of this kingdom.' Flood stoutly seconded him, and at

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<sup>1</sup> 'It is perceived that thereby making with ungrateful servants or an end would be put to those annual prostitute opponents.'—Townshend bargains which Government at pre- to the Earl of Rochford, December sent is under the sad necessity of 11, 1771. Secret.

each division the Government majority diminished. The traffic with Ireland's conscience had been costly. The Money Bill of 1769 had been rejected, and the expenditure had not been reduced. On the 12th of November, Flood called scornful attention to the deficit, and was in a minority of not more than twenty. Following up his campaign, he attacked the alteration in the Revenue Board, on the ground of increase of English influence in the House of Commons; and on the 16th he carried his resolution by a majority of forty-six. He proposed to send it to the Viceroy by the Speaker's hand, and was successful again. At the back of this came a job of Lord North's.

Lord North, for reasons of his own, had ordered Townshend to place a certain Jerry Dyson and his three sons on the Irish Establishment for a pension of a thousand a year. In vain Townshend had protested. The minister persisted, and the result was a vote of censure. 'In spite of all that I could do,' wrote the poor Viceroy, 'those who were under very high obligations to Government voted against us, and others went out.'

This time the supplies were not opposed, but to his disgust rather than surprise, the Viceroy found 'that there was once more a general design to distress and disgrace the English Government.'<sup>1</sup> In another year, unless the disorderly spirit could be controlled, the Money Bills would be again in danger. Sadly and wearily he detailed the history of his misfortunes. Tisdall and Hely Hutchinson had been languid. Malone

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Rochford, December 5, 1771. Most secret.'

had spoken for the Opposition, and divided with them. The new-made Privy Councillors, from whom so much help had been looked for, had been found wanting at the hour of trial. The Beresford faction generally had been vehement and violent; and of the rank and file of members who had either broken their engagements or had presented requests which had not been granted, and were revenging their disappointment, a black list was forwarded to London.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The list, with the attached remarks, is curiously instructive on the working Irish Parliamentary Government:—

‘Members considered as friends who have voted against Government.

‘Lord Dunluce. — His father (the Earl of Antrim) asks a marquissate. His lordship solicits a place for his tutor.

‘Hugh Skeffington. — Obtained through me a pension of 200*l.* for his brother’s widow.

‘Wm. Skeffington. — Obtained a cornetcy and a company in two years.

‘Geo. Montgomery. — I gave a friend of his, on his request, an employment of 80*l.* a year.

‘Robert Birch. — Solicits a resignation of ten livings from the Crown.

‘John Creighton. — Has an appointment of 250*l.* a year. I solicited and obtained a peerage for his father, who promised every support, but is always, as well as his other sons, against Government.

‘Robert Scott. — I made him a commissioner of the Linen Board, and he has since asked for a place.

‘Sir Arthur Brooke. — I procured him the Privy Council, and likewise, very lately, a majority of dragoons, without purchase, for his brother.

‘Ric. Gorges. — Is connected with Lord Tyrone. He has asked for a place.

‘Edward Carey. — Brother-in-law to Lord Tyrone. I procured him the Privy Council, and several things have been done to oblige him.

‘James Fortescue. — Lord Clermont’s brother. I procured him the Privy Council. He wants a peerage in remainder.

‘Colonel Cunningham. — I recommended him for the first regiment that falls during my administration.

‘Mr. Westenra. — Was brought in by Lord Clermont, and promised always to support Government. He asks for a place.

‘Colonel Pomeroy. — Obtained

So dark a second time appeared the prospects of the Government, that Ponsonby came again to the front. The new Revenue Board was naturally the object of his attack. He felt so confident of success, that he bet 500 to 3 that he would destroy it. He swore 'that he would never quit the office of door-keeper in the House of Commons till he had driven Lord Townshend out of the country.'<sup>1</sup> Lord Townshend required no driving; he would have been heartily glad to be gone; for the Cabinet left nothing undone which could aggravate his difficulties. Of 'justice to Ireland' he could obtain nothing, and for his real reform only a lukewarm support.<sup>2</sup> Of wrong, and wrong inflicted in the most insulting form, there was as much as Ireland's worst enemy could desire. Notwithstanding their ill-humour, the Parliament had

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leave of absence from America to attend Parliament. He asks for a regiment.

'Henry Pritty. — Asked and obtained a promise of Church preferment a few days before the division.

'Th. Coghlan. — I made him commissioner of the Linen Board. He asks for a place.

'Hugh Massey. — Solicits a peerage for himself, and an advance in the Revenue for his eldest son.

'Ch. Smith. — I made his brother a judge.

'Thos. Conolly. — A deanery was given to this gentleman's friend, a seat at the Revenue Board to his brother-in-law, and several

other things in the army and revenue.

'Colonel W. Bruton. — Wants to purchase the office of Quarter-master-General, and to sell his lieutenant-colonel's commission at an advanced price.

'Anthony Malone. — Has been obliged in everything that he has asked.

'Mr. Malone. — Nephew to Anthony Malone, &c., &c.

<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to Rochford, December 12.'

<sup>2</sup> 'The Cabinet had begun to doubt "whether, in the face of the opposition, it was prudent to carry out the new Revenue Board." — Rochford to Townshend, December

20.

voted the supplies. They had introduced a clause among the additional duties, protecting Irish linen from the importation of cotton manufacture from the Continent. It was a protection to which Ireland was strictly entitled. The Cabinet, free-traders when only Ireland's interests were at stake, struck the paragraph out, and returned the Money Bill without it. There is no folly like that of giving an unreasonable antagonist a moral advantage. The Commons flung the Bill out in a rage; they said distinctly they would never pass a Money Bill which had been altered in England. Heads of a new bill were drawn in which the clause was replaced, and were sent back without a moment's delay. The Cabinet swallowed the affront and yielded. The new bill was returned, compared carefully with the transmiss, and being found unchanged was passed. But <sup>1772</sup> the Revenue question had been re-opened. Flood's resolution had been sent to the king for consideration, and Townshend had but small confidence in Lord North's resolution. Nothing had been allowed which ought to have been allowed. His hands were soiled with work which he detested, and which, after all, was turning out useless. He longed to be clear of it. 'He had been fighting hard for four years,' he said, 'and he had now a right to ask for repose.' He thought the Cabinet unwise in every way; unwise in altering the Money Bill; unwise in submitting when submission wore the complexion of cowardice. 'Concessions to popular opinion,' he said (and the history of Ireland is one long illustration of his words), 'are seldom repaid



with gratitude. They have been interpreted hitherto as foundations only for further claims. It is only by a determined resolution of adhering to system, and by constant perseverance, that the authority of the English Government can be maintained in this kingdom.'

Lord North proved firmer than Townshend expected.

1772 On the 5th of February the answer came, that notwithstanding the objections of the House of Commons, his majesty regarded it as his duty to maintain the changes which had been made in the Revenue department. The patriots, of course, pursued the quarrel. Sir Charles Bingham, when the King's reply was delivered in the House, rose and moved that the resolution of the 16th of November should be read. He then declared that the maintenance of the new commissioners was an indignity to the Parliament. Ponsonby following him, proposed that the House should choose a committee to go to London and lay the sentiments of the Irish Commons before the King. The Cabinet, provoked into resolution, declined to be visited by 'Irish Parliamentary Ambassadors.' They bade Townshend prevent the accomplishment of such a piece of foolery at all hazards. If nothing else would do, he must prorogue.<sup>1</sup> It seemed as if once more the Viceroy would be driven to this alternative. One angry motion followed upon another. Flood carried a vote that the House should record its dissent, and followed it with a proposal that members

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<sup>1</sup> 'Rochford to Townshend, February 12, 1772.'

of the House who had accepted seats at the new Board were guilty of contempt, and should neither sit nor vote till they had resigned. This was too violent, and was rejected. On the 19th of February, however, the patent for the new commissioners was read aloud. A resolution less extreme was moved, that whoever had advised the increase in the number of commissioners had advised a measure contrary to the sense of the Irish legislature. The numbers on a division were equal—106 in favour, 106 against. Again a question in which the Government was directly assailed turned on the casting vote of the Speaker, and Sexton Pery, who was perfectly well acquainted with the real reasons for the alterations of the Board, and was without the excuse of delusion, did as Ponsonby had done before him, and divided against the Government.

Prorogation or dissolution! To one of these two the Viceroy's choice appeared to be limited, when suddenly the ranks of the Opposition wavered; a combination which had threatened to be irresistible dissolved like a mist. Neither the Commons' Journals nor the Irish Histories explain the change. So much only is visible, that from this time forward the Viceroy was worried with no more adverse resolutions. The new Board went quietly about its work, and for the present no further effort was made to reduce its numbers or drive its members from the House. Once more an address was carried to the Viceroy, in which the Commons declared their entire satisfaction with his excellency's administration, and an amendment conveying in every

sentence the indignation of a baffled faction conscious of defeat was rejected without a division.<sup>1</sup>

The interpretation implied in the language of the amendment is the increase in the army of placemen whose votes were at the Viceroy's disposition. But though the Viceroy had not again appointed to offices of trust men who had divided against him at the most critical moment, the Deus ex machinâ who rescued him from his difficulties was a penitent friend of the people, no less a person than Lord Shannon. When the storm was beginning there had come from that unlooked-for quarter a partial gleam of hope. The Earl, after recovering from his dismissal, had reflected that the English interest might in the long run prove the

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed amendment to the Address, May 27 :—'And we cannot sufficiently congratulate your excellency on your prudent disposition of lucrative offices among the members of this House, whereby your excellency has been enabled to excite gratitude sufficient to induce this House to bear an honourable testimony to an administration which, were it not that it has been found so beneficial to individuals, must necessarily have been represented to his majesty as the most exceptionable and destructive to this kingdom of any that has ever been carried on in it. The carrying into execution the division of the Revenue Board, contrary to the sense of this House, we should have considered and represented as

a high contempt of Parliament. But, from the distribution of the multiplied seats at the two boards now instituted among members of this House, we entertain a very different sense of that measure, and conceive that it was carried into execution, not from contempt, but the highest veneration of Parliament, the indignation of which you dreaded, and therefore thus averted. And we assure your excellency we are very much obliged to you for the offices which you have bestowed upon us. We also return you thanks for instituting offices for us at a new Board of Accounts, which, however unnecessary for the public service, we find very serviceable to ourselves.'—*Commons' Journals.*

strongest. He had made private advances to Townshend. Townshend had placed him in communication with Lord North, and had been anxiously expecting the result. A few days after the Speaker's desertion he was able to write to Lord Rochford that Lord Shannon had come to Dublin, and though still appearing to keep aloof from the Castle, 'would by-and-by support the Government upon any terms which his majesty should be pleased to approve.'

'I need not caution your lordship,' he continued, 'how extremely essential it is to the King's service here that this transaction with Lord Shannon, so critical to Government at this period, should not transpire, as its enemies would not fail to take every advantage of it, and to revolt. Lord Shannon appears to wish to return as early as possible to the service of the Crown with the utmost propriety and effect. At the same time, in justice to the use we derive from his conduct, I must request your lordship to lay the circumstances before his majesty, that it may have its due weight. It will account in great measure for the inaction of one desperate faction, and the disappointment of a shameful flying squadron, who have the greatest obligations to the Crown.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Townshend to the Earl of Rochford, Feb. 29, 1772. Secret.'

## SECTION VI.

FROM the picture of this astonishing Parliament we turn to the people whom it represented. England in <sup>1772</sup> her better days had planted Ireland with Protestant colonists, who were designed to reclaim and civilize it. Of these colonists the natural leaders enjoyed a self-granted and perpetual leave of absence. The mother country having exchanged Puritan godliness for the commercial gospel, thought fit to paralyze those who remained and were industrious, for the benefit of the Scotch and English manufacturers. The settlers, finding selfishness and injustice the rule of the country, followed naturally so inviting an example.

Before the Whiteboy agitation had abated in Tipperary, similar disturbances, rising from analogous causes, had appeared among the Presbyterian farmers of Ulster. In the south the especial grievances had been the tithing the potato gardens, the enclosure of commons, and the raising of rents. To these, which existed in equal force in the north, was added a form of extortion in the county cess.

‘Neither the laws,’ wrote Lord Townshend to the Home Secretary, ‘nor provincial justice, are administered here as in England. Neither the quarter sessions nor the grand juries give the counties the same speedy relief, nor maintain the like respect, as with us. The chief object of the grand juries is so to dispose of the

county cesses as best suits their party views and private convenience. The sums raised by these gentlemen throughout the kingdom amount to not less than 130,000*l.* per annum, which is levied upon the tenantry the lower classes of which are in a state of poverty not to be described. It may easily be imagined what the poor people feel when these charges are added to rents already stretched to the uttermost.' <sup>1</sup>

The Ulster Protestants, being more patient and law-abiding than the Catholics of the south, had been peculiarly exposed to these exacting and oppressive cesses. 'It is notorious,' Captain Erskine reported, who was sent by Townshend to the north to examine into the complaints which were brought to him, 'what use is made by grand juries of the powers given them to lay cess for roads and bridges. Jobs upon jobs, one more infamous than another, serve to support the interests of some leading men in the country. I do not believe the roads in any part of the world are as bad as in these five counties; <sup>2</sup> yet I am told they have, from time immemorial, been cessed by their grand juries at 50,000*l.* a year.' <sup>3</sup>

In 1764 parties of the poorer tenants collected under the name Oak Boys, to bring the landlords into more moderate dealing with them. Cattle were houghed or slashed. Farmsteads were burnt. Combinations were formed to resist cess and rent and tithe. The Oak

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Rochford, March 18, 1772.'

<sup>2</sup> Derry, Armagh, Tyrone, Down, and Antrim.

<sup>3</sup> 'Captain Erskine to Mr. Lee, April 10, 1772.' S. P. O.

Boys, however, never became formidable, and the landlords had gone on in the high oppressive style which had become natural to them. The increase of the linen trade in the first years of Townshend's Government gave them fresh opportunities. 'The northern Protestants,' in a 'remonstrance' which they sent up to the Government, drew an instructive picture of the treatment to which they had been subjected. During the first half of the century, they said, 'the wise conduct and encouragement of the nobility of Ulster' had so developed the flax manufacture, that the workpeople 'had been enabled to make decent settlements and live comfortably.' The arable lands were all occupied and well cultivated. The inhabitants multiplied, the country prospered. 'The landlords then thirsted to share the people's benefits by raising their rents, which would have been very reasonable in a moderate degree, but of late they had run to great excesses.' 'When the tenant's lease was ended they published in the newspapers that such a parcel of land was to be let, and that proposals in writing would be received for it. They invited every covetous, envious, and malicious person to offer for his neighbour's possessions and improvements. The tenant, knowing he must be the highest bidder or turn out, he knew not whither, would offer more than the value. If he complained to the landlord that the land was too dear, the landlord answered that he knew it was so, but as it was in a trading country, the tenant must make up the deficiency by his industry. Those who possessed the greatest estates were now so rich that

they could not find delicacies in their own country to bestow their wealth on, but carried it abroad, to lavish there the entire days' sweat of thousands of their poor people. They drained the country, and neglected their own duties. Nature assigned the landlord to be a father and counsellor of his people, that he might keep peace and order among them, and protect them and encourage industry. Though the order of things had made it necessary that the lower should serve under the higher, yet the charter of dominion had not said that the lower should suffer by the higher.'<sup>1</sup>

Political economy, though passing into practical life, had not yet become the rule of administrations. George the Third ordered Townshend to do his utmost to convince the landlords of their 'infatuation.'<sup>2</sup> Townshend himself had already introduced a Tenants' Protection Bill into the Irish Parliament, but 'had been defeated by the popularity-hunting party in the House of Commons.'<sup>3</sup> At length a flagrant and enormous act of tyranny set light to the fuel which was lying everywhere ready to kindle.

Sir Arthur Chichester, the great Viceroy of Ireland under James the First, was of all Englishmen who ever settled in the country the most useful to it. His descendant, the Lord Donegal of whom it has become necessary to speak, was, perhaps, the person who inflicted the greatest injury on it. Sir Arthur had been rewarded

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<sup>1</sup> 'Remonstrance of the Northern Protestants.'—*Irish MSS.*, 1772. S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Rochford to Townshend, April 6, 1772.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Townshend to Rochford, March 11.' S. P. O.



for his services by vast estates in the county Antrim. The fifth Earl and first Marquis of Donegal, already, by the growth of Belfast, by the fruits of other men's labours while he was sitting still, enormously rich, found his income still unequal to his yet more enormous expenditure. His name is looked for in vain among the nobles who, in return for their high places, were found in the active service of their country. He was one of those habitual and splendid absentees who discharged his duties to the God who made him by consenting to exist, and to the country which supported him by magnificently doing as he would with his own.

Many of his Antrim leases having fallen in simultaneously, he demanded a hundred thousand pounds in fines for the renewal of them. The tenants, all Protestants, offered the interest of the money in addition to the rent. It could not be. Speculative Belfast capitalists paid the fine, and took the lands over the heads of the tenants to sublet. A Mr. Upton, another great Antrim proprietor, imitated the example, and 'at once a whole country side were driven from their habitations.' The sturdy Scots, who in five generations had reclaimed Antrim from the wilderness, saw the farms which they and their fathers had made valuable let by auction to the highest bidder; and when they refused to submit themselves to robbery, saw them let to others, and let in many instances to Catholics, who would promise anything to recover their hold upon the soil.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I am not ignorant that Arthur Young palliates these evictions. He

'The law may warrant these proceedings, but will not justify them,' wrote Captain Erskine, when the evicted peasants and artisans were meeting to express their sense of them. 'Should the causes of these riots be looked into, it will be found that few have had juster foundations. When the consequences of driving six or seven thousand manufacturing and labouring families out of Ireland come to be felt, I question whether the rectitude of these gentlemen's intentions will be held by the world a sufficient excuse for the irreparable damage they are doing.'<sup>1</sup>

The most substantial of the expelled tenantry gathered their effects together and sailed to join their countrymen in the New World, where the Scotch-Irish became known as the most bitter of the secessionists. Between those who were too poor to emigrate, and the Catholics who were in possession of their homes, there grew a protracted feud, which took form at last in the conspiracy of the Peep of Day Boys; in the fierce and savage expulsion of the intruders, who were bidden go to hell or Connaught; and in the counter-organization of the Catholic Defenders, who spread over the whole island, and made the army of insurrection in 1798. It is rare that two private persons have power to create effects so considerable as to assist in dismembering an empire, and provoking a civil war. Lord Donegal for his services was rewarded with a marquisate, and Mr.

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wrote before the consequences which extended from the Old World to the New had distinctly developed themselves.

<sup>1</sup> 'Captain Erskine to Mr. Lee, April 10, 1772.' S. P. O.

Upton with a viscountcy. If rewards were proportioned to deserts, a fitter retribution to both of them would have been forfeiture and Tower Hill.

A precedent so tempting and so lucrative was naturally followed. Other landlords finding the trade profitable began to serve their tenants with notices to quit. The farmers and peasants combined to defend themselves. Where law was the servant of oppression, force was their one resource. They called themselves Hearts of Steel. Their object was to protect themselves from universal robbery. Their resistance was not against the Government—it was against the landlords and the landlords' agents, and nothing else. In the Viceroy they felt rightly that they had a friend, and they appealed to him in a modest petition.

*'Petition of those persons known by the name of  
Hearts of Steel.*

'That we are all Protestants and Protestant Dissenters, and bear unfeigned loyalty to his present majesty and the Hanoverian succession.

'That we who are all groaning under oppression, and have no other possible way of redress, are forced to join ourselves together to resist. By oversetting our lands we are reduced to poverty and distress, and by our rising we mean no more but to have our lands, that we could live thereon, and procure necessaries of life for ourselves and our starving families.

That some of us refusing to pay the extravagant rent demanded by our landlords have been turned

out, and our lands given to Papists, who will promise any rent.

‘That we are sorely aggrieved with the county cesses, which, though heavy in themselves, are rendered more so by being applied to private purposes.

‘Yet lest it should be said that by refusing to pay the cess we fly in the face of the law, which we do not intend, we will pay the present cess; and we hope the gentlemen of the county of Down will in future have pity on the distressed inhabitants.

‘That it is not wanton folly that prompts us to be Hearts of Steel, but the weight of oppression. Were the cause removed the effects would cease, and our landlords as heretofore live in the affection of their tenants.

‘May it please you to enquire into the cause of our grievances, and lend your hand to eschew the evils which seem to threaten the Protestants of the North; and let not false suggestions of men partial to their own cause inflame your wrath against innocent and injured persons, who are far removed from the ear of Government and any other possible means of redress. Oh that the cry of the oppressed might reach the throne of Britain! Our mild and gracious sovereign from his well-known goodness would extend his care to the suffering Protestants in the north of this kingdom.

‘BY THE HEARTS OF STEEL.’<sup>1</sup>

Unjust laws provoke and compel resistance. Violence

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish MSS.*, 1772. S. P. O.

follows, and crime and guilt; but the guilt, when the account is made up, does not lie entirely with the poor wretch who is called the criminal. The Hearts of Steel destroyed the cattle and farmsteads of the intruding tenants. They attacked gentlemen's houses and lawyers' offices chiefly in search of deeds and leases; of theft they were never accused. Magistrates as usual would not act: they preferred to leave to the Government the odium of repressing riots of which they were themselves the cause. Juries, after the time-honoured fashion, refused to convict, and witnesses to give evidence. The Presbyterian clergy exerted themselves as no one else did, but they did not conceal their opinion that the people were in the right.<sup>1</sup>

Townshend saw the phenomena with eyes unjaundiced. 'He was satisfied that the disturbances sprung from gross iniquity, and that they could be cured only by the lenity of the proprietors, who, if they refused to let their lands on more moderate terms, would compel their tenants to go to America, or to any part of the world where they could receive the reward which was honestly due to their labours.'<sup>2</sup> The House of Commons thought

<sup>1</sup> Address of the Presbytery of Temple Patrick, forwarded by Townshend to London, with the following passage underlined:—  
*'Now though we, the members of the Presbytery, cannot but lament the heavy oppression that too many are under, from the excessive price of land, and the unfriendly practices of many, who contribute to the oppression by proposing for their neighbours' possessions, by which means they are too often deprived of the improvements made by their forefathers and themselves, which may be the occasion of the present illegal measure—yet we are convinced that violence defeats its own ends,'*  
 &c.

<sup>2</sup> 'Townshend to the Earl of Suffolk, March 21.'

differently. The gentry of the North petitioned for troops to defend them, and the House appointed a committee of enquiry. The facts were on the surface, and might have been comprehended without extreme effort of genius. The Protestants of Ireland were as one to four of the entire population. They were, as has been often said, a garrison set to maintain the law and the English connection. The landlords in stupid selfishness were expelling their Protestant tenantry because Catholics promised them a larger rent. They were driving the very flower of their own army to a country which was already on the edge of rebellion, and uniting in sympathy with that rebellion their comrades who were left behind. An act of such obvious insanity might have been expected to be condemned on the instant by the united voices of the empire. The King saw the infatuation of it; the English Cabinet saw the inconveniences of it, and the Viceroy the iniquity. The Irish Patriot House of Commons could see only an invasion of the rights of landlords. The Committee reported that the increase of rents demanded was not exorbitant. The Hearts of Steel by their resistance were dissolving the bonds of society. The disorders of Ulster required force to check them; and since the northern juries refused to do their duties, it was necessary that prisoners charged with a share in the riots should be tried in counties where they were unknown. In this spirit an Act was carried through Parliament. The Viceroy was called on to employ the army to restore order, and General Gisborne was sent down with as many regiments as could be spared.

General Gisborne executed his orders with moderation. He was received by the people as a friend. They had petitioned Parliament, they said, but Parliament would not answer them. 'The supreme Judge himself' had at length looked upon their distresses and excited them to commotion, 'to cause the landlords, on whom no mild means could prevail, to observe the pale faces and the thin clothing of the honest Protestant subjects who had enriched the country by their industry.' They submitted, not to their masters, but to the English commander: they invited him to restore peace, not by killing them, but by remedying their wrongs.<sup>1</sup> Quiet was easily established. The Hearts of Steel came of a race who had no love for riots; and if redress was refused, they had a better resource than rebellion. The exactions had not been universal, and where attempted were not everywhere persevered in; but mischief irretrievable had been already done. The linen trade from other causes had entered on a period of stagnation, and the consequent distress gave an impetus to the emigration to the land of promise which assumed presently enormous proportions.

Flights of Protestant settlers had been driven out earlier in the century by the idiotcy of the bishops. Fresh multitudes now winged their way to join them, and in no tender mood towards the institutions under which they had been so cruelly dealt with. The House of Commons had backed up the landlords. The next

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<sup>1</sup> Remonstrance of the 'Hearts of Steel,' enclosed by Townshend to Lord Suffolk, 1772.

year they had to hear from the Linen Board that 'many thousands of the best manufacturers and weavers with their families had gone to seek their bread in America, and that thousands were preparing to follow.' Again a committee was appointed to enquire. This time the blame was laid on England, which had broken the linen compact, given bounties to the Lancashire millowners which Belfast was not allowed to share, and 'in jealousy of Irish manufactures' had laid duties on Irish sail cloth, contrary to express stipulation. The accusation, as the reader knows, was true. Religious bigotry, commercial jealousy, and modern landlordism had combined to do their worst against the Ulster settlement. The emigration was not the whole of the mischief. Those who went carried their arts and their tools along with them, and at the rate at which the stream was flowing the colonies would soon have no need of British and Irish imports. In the two years which followed the Antrim evictions, thirty thousand Protestants left Ulster for a land where there was no legal robbery, and where those who sowed the seed could reap the harvest. They went with bitterness in their hearts, cursing and detesting the aristocratic system of which the ennobling qualities were lost, and only the worst retained. The south and west were caught by the same movement, and ships could not be found to carry the crowds who were eager to go. 'The emigration was not only depriving Ireland of its manufactures, but of the sinews of its trade.' 'Rich yeomen with their old leases expired' refused to renew them in a



country where they were to live at other men's mercy, and departed with their families and their capital. Protestant settlements which had lingered through the century now almost disappeared. Bandon, Tullamore, Athlone, Kilbeggan, and many other places once almost exclusively English and Scotch, were abandoned to the priests and the Celts.<sup>1</sup> Pitiabile and absurd story, on the face of which was written madness!

Industry deliberately ruined by the commercial jealousy of England; the country abandoned to anarchy by the scandalous negligence of English statesmen; idle absentee magnates forgetting that duty had a meaning, and driving their tenants into rebellion and exile; resident gentry wasting their substance in extravagance, and feeding their riot by wringing the means of it out of the sweat of the poor; a Parliament led by patriots, whose love of country meant but the art to embarrass Government, and wrench from it the spoils of office; Government escaping from its difficulties by lavishing gold which, like metallic poison, destroyed the self-respect and wrecked the character of those who stooped to take it; the working members of the community, and the worthiest part of it, flying from a soil where some fatal enchantment condemned to failure every effort made for its redemption—such was the fair condition of the Protestant colony planted in better days to show the Irish the fruits of a nobler belief than their own, and the industrial virtues of a nobler race! Who

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<sup>1</sup> 'Report of the Committee of the House of Commons as to Emigration, 1774.'—*Commons' Journals*.

can wonder that English rule in Ireland has become a byword? who can wonder that the Celts failed to recognize a superiority which had no better result to show for itself?

We lay the fault on the intractableness of the race. The modern Irishman is of no race, so blended now is the blood of Celt and Dane, Saxon and Norman, Scot and Frenchman. The Irishman of the last century rose to his natural level whenever he was removed from his own unhappy country. In the Seven Years' War Austria's best generals were Irishmen. Brown was an Irishman; Lacy was an Irishman; O'Donnell's name speaks for him; and Lally Tollendal, who punished England at Fontenoy, was O'Mullally of Tollendally. Strike the names of Irishmen out of our own public service, and we lose the heroes of our proudest exploits—we lose the Wellesleys, the Pallisers, the Moores, the Eyres, the Cootes, the Napiers; we lose half the officers and half the privates who conquered India for us, and fought our battles in the Peninsula. What the Irish could do as enemies we were about to learn when the Ulster exiles crowded to the standard of Washington. What they can do even at home we know at this present hour, when, under exceptional discipline as police, they are at once the most sorely tempted and the most nobly faithful of all subjects of the British race.

'Realms without justice,' said Henry the Eighth long ago, writing of the same Ireland which is still an unsolved problem, 'be but tyrannies and roberies more consonant to beastly appetites than to the laudable liff

of reasonable creatures.'<sup>1</sup> When England learns to prefer realities to forms, when she recognizes once for all, that having taken possession of Ireland for her own purposes, she is bound before God and man to make the laws obeyed there, and to deal justly between man and man, disaffection and discontent will disappear, and Ireland will cease to be a reproach; but the experiment remains to be tried.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Henry VIII. to the Earl of Surrey.'—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 52.

## CHAPTER III.

## LORD HARCOURT AND COLONEL BLAQUIERE.

## SECTION I.

LORD TOWNSHEND had said that endeavours were being made to unite the popular party in Ireland and America. There were good reasons <sup>1772</sup> why at that moment these two countries should be of peculiar interest to one another. Ireland was but a colony of longer standing, and the Americans saw a picture there of the condition to which an English colony could be reduced in which the mother country had her own way. Their trade was already exclusively in English hands. In a little while they too might have an established church, interfering with liberty of conscience; their farms, which they had cleared and clothed with corn and orchards, might be claimed by landlords. The Scotch-Irish emigrants especially had their suspicions on the alert, whose grievances were more recent, and whose bitter feelings were kept alive by the continued arrivals from Ulster. None of the Transatlantic settlers had more cause to complain, for none had deserved so well of the country from which they had been driven.

The Protestant settlers in Ireland at the beginning of the 17th century were of the same metal with those who afterwards sailed in the 'May Flower'—Presbyterians, Puritans, Independents, in search of wider breathing space than was allowed them at home. By an unhappy perversity they had fallen under the same stigma and were exposed to the same inconveniences. The bishops had chafed them with persecutions. The noble lords and gentlemen of the Anglo-Irish communion looked askance at them as republicans. The common sufferings of all orders of Protestants in 1641 failed to teach the madness of divisions in so small a body; the heroism with which the Scots held the northern province against the Kilkenny Parliament and Owen Roe O'Neil was an insufficient offset against the sin of nonconformity. The conquest of Ireland was achieved finally by the armies of the Commonwealth, and Leinster and Munster were occupied by Cromwell's troopers as an armed industrial garrison. The shadow which fell on Puritanism at the Restoration once more blighted the new colonies. The soldiers of the Protector changed their swords into ploughshares, repaired the desolation of the civil war, and in a few years so changed the face of Ireland, that the growth of prosperity there stirred the jealousy of Lancashire. But Nonconformity was still a stain for which no other excellence could atone. The persecutions were renewed, but did not cool Presbyterian loyalty. When the native race made their last effort under James the Second to recover their lands, the Calvinists of Derry

won immortal honour for themselves, and flung over the wretched annals of their adopted country a solitary gleam of true glory. Even this passed for nothing. They were still Dissenters, still unconscious that they owed obedience to the hybrid successors of St. Patrick, the prelates of the Establishment; and no sooner was peace re-established than spleen and bigotry were again at their old work. William had so far recognized their merits as to bestow on their ministers a small annual grant. Vexed with suits in the ecclesiastical courts, forbidden to educate their children in their own faith, treated as dangerous to a State which but for them would have had no existence, and associated with Papists in an Act of Parliament which deprived them of their civil rights, the most earnest of them abandoned the unthankful service. They saw at last that the liberties for which they and their fathers had fought were not to be theirs in Ireland. If they intended to live as freemen, speaking no lies, and professing openly the creed of the Reformation, they must seek a country where the long arm of prelacy was still too short to reach them. During the first half of the eighteenth century, Down, Antrim, Tyrone, Armagh, and Derry were emptied of Protestant inhabitants, who were of more value to Ireland than Californian gold mines; while the scattered colonies of the south, denied chapels of their own, and offered, if they did not wish to be atheists or Papists, the alternative of conformity or departure, took the Government at their word and melted away

As the House of Hanover grew firmer in its seat, the High Church party declined in power, and dissent as such ceased to be visited with active penalties. The Test Act was not repealed. The municipal offices were still monopolized by members of the Establishment. The State continued to insist on conformity as a condition of employment, military or civil. But the Ulster Presbyterians were saved by the exclusion from being tainted by the universal corruption. Their numbers were repaired with the growth of the linen trade. They were frugal and industrious; their looms and their flax fields prospered with them. Emigration slackened, and the Protestant population had again become an important feature in the community, when the absentee landlords cast their eyes on the wealth which had been silently created, and, in an evil hour, put out their hands to seize it. At once the outflow of Protestants recommenced under changed and far more dangerous conditions. A large commerce had grown up between Belfast and the American plantations. Relations long separated renewed their ties. Intercourse brought exchange of thought, comparison of grievances, and common schemes of redress. The pulses of the industrial classes in the two countries began to beat in perilously earnest sympathy.

One lesson especially the mother country had never ceased to impress upon her colonies, that they existed not for their own sakes, but for hers. Overlooking the circumstances out of which they took their real origin, she regarded them as created by herself, as outlets for

her own productions. They were strictly forbidden to trade with any countries but England and Ireland, or ship their cargoes in any but English vessels.

To these conditions the American colonies had hitherto submitted, as the price of English protection. Their ports were small, the population sparse and generally consisting of farmers, and the articles which they most needed England could best supply. Left to themselves, they might have been worried by Spain, and perhaps invaded and conquered by France.

Lord Chatham had made an end of French rivalry. The Americans shared the glory of a war of which the benefit was so largely theirs. Twenty-four thousand colonists had assisted England to conquer Canada. Four hundred American privateers had driven the French from the coast and the lakes. The war had left England with a debt of 148 millions. It was suggested at the Peace of Paris that the colonies should contribute something towards the interest of it, and the colonists did not dispute their equitable liability. Had Pitt been still in power, some arrangement might perhaps have been successfully attempted. Grenville's less delicate hand provoked the first dispute. He suggested in 1764 the extension of the stamp duty to America, under the authority of the English Parliament. From authority to impose a tax the step to despotism was short, and, it was feared, certain. When once the consent of the taxpayer, through his representative, was held unnecessary, no second barrier remained.

America remonstrated, not violently, for she offered



to find a substitute; but she stood out upon the principle. Grenville and Charles Townshend stood upon principle as well. In 1765, in spite of caution from wiser heads, the colonial stamp duty was imposed by Parliament; Charles Townshend, talking of 'our American children planted by our care, nourished by our indulgence, now fitly contributing to the necessities of the State.' 'They planted by your care!' Colonel Barré replied; 'your oppression planted them. They nourished by your indulgence! they grew by your neglect of them.' Both positions were true. But for Anglican bishops there would have been no Puritan exiles. But for Pitt, America would have been French. The remembrance of wrong is longer lived than gratitude for benefits received. Virginia resisted. New England resisted. Congresses met, and drew declarations of colonial rights. The Stamp Act was disobeyed; business went on as if the Act did not exist; and in the following year, being obviously useless, it was abandoned. The Act repealing it, however, reasserted the right of England to tax the colonies, if she pleased to exercise that right; and the provincial Legislature of New York, which had given special offence, was suspended, as an admonition to the rest.

America having secured the substance of the victory, did not quarrel about words. So long as the claim was not enforced, it was harmless. The colonists did not anticipate a renewal of the experiment; but England had been touched in her pride. In 1767 Charles Townshend brought the question to an issue

once more. A Stamp Act could be evaded without serious inconvenience. Customs duties being levied at the ports could be evaded only by a refusal to consume the articles on which they were imposed. A small tax, just sufficient to try the principle, was laid on glass, paper, and tea. The Massachusetts Chambers passed a resolution that these duties should not be levied. Being required to rescind a vote which was held an act of rebellion, they re-affirmed it by a majority of 92 to 17. Ships of war were sent out with a couple of regiments. Boston decided to arm in opposition; and the colonies generally, following Irish precedent, came to a common resolution that they would import nothing of any kind from England till the duties were abandoned. To the restriction of their commerce they had submitted. The sea might be part of the British dominions. Taxation they would not submit to while they were unrepresented in the British Parliament.

Half alarmed, half exasperated, the English Government took a middle course, and the worst which they could have chosen. They abandoned the duties on glass and paper; they retained a nominal tea duty. Had they tried force at once, they might have crushed the colonies in detail, and for a time have broken them down. Had they made a frank surrender, the colonies for a time also would have refrained from raising the question of separation. They maintained the cause of the irritation; they took no active steps to compel obedience. Ill-feeling grew rapidly. Bloody riots broke out in Boston between the garrison and the

citizens. For four years, through the thirteen colonies, in town and village, tea, which had become a necessary of life, disappeared from the breakfast-table. At length the decrease of consumption having created a glut in the East Indian warehouses, and as it was supposed that by this time the colonists would be weary of the strife, it was determined to tempt their constancy with a supply of the coveted luxury at a price which, notwithstanding the duty, was still lower than Americans had ever paid for it before.

The tea ships generally were prevented from making their way into the American harbours, or else  
1773 were sent back without being allowed to unload. A ship which entered Boston harbour was less fortunate. A party of men, disguised as Mohawk Indians in their war-paint, stole on board one midnight, overpowered the crew, burst the chests open, and emptied them into the sea.

Struck thus in the face, England lost its temper and its prudence. The port of Boston was de-  
1774 clared to be closed until the tea was paid for. The Massachusetts charter was recalled, and, by a new constitution, the colony was placed under the Government of Quebec. General Gage was sent out in haste with reinforcements, attended by a squadron, to occupy the harbour. He landed on the 13th of May, took military possession of the town, and fortified the peninsula to which it was then confined. The colonial Legislature, not recognizing the dissolution, assembled a few miles off at Concord, organized a separate ad-

ministration, and called the settlers to arms. All down the seaboard to the Carolinas the alarm spread of danger to liberty. If Massachusetts was overwhelmed, each State knew that its own turn would follow. A Congress met at Philadelphia. The deputies of thirteen States agreed that they would pay no taxes, direct or indirect, to which their consent had not been asked. They stood by their non-importation agreement. They appealed to the British nation, and to Britain's Sovereign and theirs. To the British people they said, 'Place us as we were when the war ended, and we shall be satisfied.' To the King they said that in peace they cost Great Britain nothing; in war they had contributed hitherto to the imperial expenses, and would continue to contribute: they asked nothing but that their rights under the constitution should not be invaded.

Dr. Franklin, who had been long in England, and was personally intimate with many of the chief English statesmen, took charge of the address to <sup>1775</sup> the Crown. He was leaning on the bar of the House of Lords when the question was debated in that assembly whether he should be allowed to present it. At that great crisis in his country's future, Chatham came once more to the front.

*Si Pergama dextrâ  
Defendi possent etiam hâc defensa fuissent.*

Chatham's name was honoured in America beyond that of every other Englishman. He insisted on the madness or the wickedness of using force in an unnatural quarrel. America was willing to admit the

supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. America would not refuse to contribute of her own accord for the interest of the war debts. England must meet her with a frank confession that if she was to be taxed, her own consent was necessary; that it was unlawful to employ the army to destroy the rights of the people; the port of Boston must be thrown open again, and Gage and his troops must be recalled.

So advised the greatest of living Englishmen, who had raised his country to the proudest eminence which she had attained since the death of the Protector. But Lord North and his Cabinet desired to be thought better patriots than Chatham. Lord Sandwich moved that Chatham's propositions could not be entertained. Glancing at Franklin, he said that he had in his eye the person by whom they had been drawn—the most mischievous and bitterest enemy the country had ever known.

Franklin could not answer, but Chatham did. His words were his own, he said. He had given the House his own opinion; but had he needed help, he would not have been ashamed of asking it 'from one whom all Europe esteemed, who was an honour not to the English nation only, but to human nature.' The House of Lords went with Sandwich, and determined by a great majority that the colonists should be taught their duties. The Cabinet felt more uncertainty than they confessed. Private conferences were held with Franklin; and Franklin, to whom, as to those by whom he was employed, a dismemberment of the empire was no

trifling thing to be rushed after with foolish haste, was most earnest to suggest means by which the catastrophe could be averted. He undertook that the tea should be paid for; and that the colonies should contribute to war expenses. If England would relinquish her monopolies and give them free trade, they would do all which was expected of them. On the other hand, as Chatham had said, the duties must be abandoned and the troops be withdrawn. The Imperial Parliament must disclaim a right to legislate for the internal regulation of the colonies, and the cancelled charter must be restored to Massachusetts.

To most of these conditions Lord North was ready to agree. The negotiation went off upon a point of honour. All else might be conceded, but England could not humble herself before Massachusetts. At all risks the new Constitution must be upheld. For this feather terms infinitely more favourable than we now dare demand from our remaining dependencies were idly rejected. Franklin carried back the news that he had failed, and a new page was turned in the history of mankind.

Both sides had paused upon their arms till the answer came. Debate was then over. It was now for action to decide between them. The Massachusetts Congress had employed the winter in collecting stores at Concord. Gage finding the issue to be war, resolved on dealing a vigorous blow. On the night of the 18th of April he despatched Colonel Smith with 800 grenadiers to destroy the magazines. Concord is twenty

miles from Boston. Lexington is a village on the road a few miles short of it. In Lexington Street, at five in the morning of the 19th, a party of Massachusetts militia were assembled, uncertain (as before the first blood is shed in a civil war men always are uncertain) what they were precisely to do. The troops settled the question by firing on them. They scattered. Colonel Smith went on, accomplished his work, and was again returning on the same road when he found the houses in Lexington, and the walls and hedges outside it, lined with riflemen. The soldiers, tired with a thirty-mile march and encumbered with their knapsacks, found themselves received with a close and deadly fire from practised marksmen. Their enemies were country farmers and farm servants, trained as hunters in the woods, and light of foot as they were skilful in aim. They would have been destroyed without a chance of defending themselves, had not Gage, who had heard of what had passed in the morning, sent forward reinforcements. Fresh troops arriving on the scene drove the Americans off, and the shattered grenadiers reached Boston at sunset with a loss of nearly half their strength.

The effect of the battle of Lexington was to enclose the British within the lines of the city. The headquarters of the Americans were pushed forward to Cambridge, four miles only outside the walls, and Gage's communications with the country were wholly cut off. The inglorious investment it was thought could be but of short duration. Regiments were pouring in from

England. General Howe arrived at the beginning of the summer, and decided to give the colonists a decisive lesson without loss of time. The Peninsula of Charlestown is divided from that of Boston Proper by six hundred yards of water which are now bridged over. The Charlestown ridge ascends with a gentle slope from the shore, commanding the harbour and the city opposite. The highest points of it, known as Breed's Hill and Bunker's Hill, are nearly two hundred feet above the sea. The Americans pushing forward from Cambridge had entrenched themselves on the brow of this ridge. They had brought up cannon which distressed the ships in the harbour, and threw shot into the army quarters in the town. The entire American force amounted to no more than 1500 men, and those only untrained militia. Such a body was thought unable to resist even for a moment a superior number of regular troops. On the 17th of June Sir William Howe crossed over with 3000 men to drive them off. Covered by a heavy fire from the guns of the fleet, he advanced with easy confidence. The Americans waited till the English were close upon their lines, and then poured in a fire so deadly that they reeled backwards down the hill in astonished confusion. They rallied rapidly, again charged, and again retired before the tremendous reception which they encountered. Determined to win the hill or die, they rushed up a last time and plunged over the breastwork; and then, but only then, and at leisure and in good order, the Massachusetts farmers withdrew. That one summer afternoon's work had



cost the British army more than eleven hundred men, of whom ninety were officers. Sir William Howe might have said, like Pyrrhus, that a few more such victories would end the dream of the conquest of America.

And who and what were these provincial militia who had given the soldiers of England so rude a lesson? Most of them, no doubt, were descendants of the ancient Puritan stock, reinforced from the old country from time to time by men who had the same quarrel as their fathers with the constituted authorities in Church and State.

But throughout the revolted colonies, and, therefore, probably in the first to begin the struggle, all evidence shows that the foremost, the most irreconcilable, the most determined in pushing the quarrel to the last extremity, were the Scotch Irish whom the bishops and Lord Donegal and Company had been pleased to drive out of Ulster. 'It is a fact beyond question,' says Plowden, 'that most of the early successes in America were immediately owing to the vigorous exertions and prowess of the Irish emigrants who bore arms in that cause.'<sup>1</sup> Ramsay says the Irish in America were almost to a man on the side of Independence. 'They had fled from oppression in their native country, and could not brook the idea that it should follow them. Their national prepossessions in favour of liberty were strengthened by their religious opinions. They were Presbyterians, and therefore mostly Whigs.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PLOWDEN, vol. ii. p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the American Revolution*, p. 597.

There is a Bunker's Hill<sup>1</sup> close outside Belfast. Massachusetts tradition has forgotten how the name came to the Charlestown Peninsula. It is possible that the connection with Ireland is a coincidence. It is possible that the name of a spot so memorable in American history was brought over by one of those exiles, whose children saw there the beginning of the retribution that followed on the combination of follies which had destroyed the chance of making Ireland a Protestant country, and had filled Protestant Ulster with passionate sympathy for the revolted colonists.

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<sup>1</sup> Bunker's Hill is supposed to be a corruption of Bruncker's Hill. Captain Bruncker was an officer who came to Ulster with Lord Essex in 1572, and received a grant of land in Antrim.

## SECTION II.

GEORGE THE THIRD had intended to end corruption in the Irish Parliament. The effect of Lord Towns-  
<sup>1772</sup> hend's efforts had been to make it more corrupt than before. Where the laws by which a country is to be governed depend on the voices of representatives, and where these representatives acknowledge no motive but private interest, bribery is the only method by which the administration can be carried on. The House of Commons had been controlled hitherto by an oligarchy, who shared the patronage of Ireland among them as if it had been a family inheritance. The Viceroy, with the assistance of the rank and file, had wrested the public offices out of the hands of the men who had preyed on the revenue so long and so systematically; but he had bought his victory by borrowing his adversaries' weapons, making office the reward of Parliamentary subserviency; and when preferments could not be had to feel the voracity of his supporters, he had added further to the bloated Pension List. Success so purchased can be continued only by the means by which it has been obtained. The interesting lords and gentlemen who constituted the two Houses of the Irish Legislature understood the value of their assistance from the Viceroy's eagerness to secure it. Those who had sold their votes for a single measure or group of measures were like the possessors of some fatal secret, whom a person afraid of

disclosure had been rash enough to bribe to silence. The claimants for Crown favour could not all be satisfied, but neglect to satisfy them brought immediate retribution. Townshend's majorities dwindled, and at length disappeared. With disgust he drew out the list of the traitors who had disowned their obligations. He found he could rely on them no more, and in despairing contempt he fell back on the most powerful of the aristocracy whom he had defeated. Lord Shannon returned with a smile to the assistance of a Viceroy who had been the victim of a delusion that Ireland could be honourably governed by a Parliament of its own. The Opposition was disarmed, and Ponsonby was obliged to part with his hope of driving the Viceroy in disgrace from the country.

Townshend, however, was himself disinclined to bear longer a burden which had become hateful to him. For four years he had been attempting a task which it was impossible to accomplish. He petitioned to be allowed to resign, and his request was granted. He retired with the thanks and compliments of the Parliament, his relations with which had undergone such strange vicissitudes. He left behind him one work, though one work only, of permanent improvement. His new Revenue Board was soon abandoned to clamour. But the great families were no longer allowed to abuse the authority of the Crown under the name of 'Lords Justices. The Viceroy of Ireland was henceforth to be resident through his term of office, unless for brief intervals and on unforeseen occasions.

Townshend's successor was a nobleman the very reverse of himself in every feature of intellect and temperament. Townshend was energetic, brilliant, and in the prime of his years, and Harcourt was over sixty, decorous, dignified, inured by habit to the inanities of Courts, with views generally honourable, but pursuing them with languor, with the smallest imaginable insight into Ireland and its conditions, and with an indolent cunning in the place of statesmanship. He had been for nine years tutor to the King before his accession. He had negotiated the alliance between his master and the Princess Charlotte. He would have passed as no more than an ornamental lay figure through a life which he ended strangely by falling down a well at Nuneham, except for his Irish viceroyalty; it came to him at an unlucky time, and brought his figure into distinct visibility.

With Lord Harcourt arrived a satellite very far more interesting than his primary, the Secretary, John de Blaquiere, himself a Colonel of Dragoons, descendant from a Huguenot family, who had come to England at the beginning of the century. De Blaquiere's character will reveal itself in the progress of the story. To Lord North he writes with a confidential familiarity which shows that they were on terms of closest intimacy. He describes himself in one of his letters to Lord North as 'your threadpaper friend,' which, perhaps, sufficiently expresses his appearance.

Like his predecessor, the new Viceroy was directed 'absolutely to discourage all applications for pensions, salaries, and offices, for new peerages, or advancement

of peers already existing to higher titles;’ to prohibit ‘the sale of offices or employments, notwithstanding the present proprietor may have purchased the same.’<sup>1</sup> The era of purity was at last to begin. Lord Harcourt landed at Ringsend on the 30th of November, 1772, with a year of quiet still before him, Parliament not meeting till the beginning of the following autumn. A week later Townshend left Dublin amidst general acclamations, Harcourt being, as he confessed, glad to be rid ‘of his rather overpowering presence.’ For himself he described his prospects as most flattering. The Duke of Leinster, to mark his delight at the change, wrote to him most affectionately. Lord Kildare stood at his side in the viceregal box the first evening on which he was at the play. Shannon was ‘most polite.’ John Ponsonby had been at the levée, ‘perhaps determined by Lord Shannon.’ Flood had been there also, indicating that he was not unwilling to be taken into service. It appeared that Flood, the most eloquent and passionate of Townshend’s opponents, had already been feeling his way towards employment with Lord Frederick Campbell, Townshend’s secretary. Campbell had mocked him with promises which had been left unfulfilled. Like so many of his countrymen, his chief ambition was to hold office under the rule which he affected to execrate, but he was wary of being again deceived.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Rochford to Lord Harcourt, October 26, 1772. Secret and confidential.’

<sup>2</sup> Harcourt, writing afterwards to Lord North, said that Flood told him that ‘he had been determined

The compliments of the reception being over, the realities followed. The noble Lords were well disposed, but on their own conditions. A few days after the new Viceroy's arrival, Lord Shannon asked for a private interview, to submit as usual the terms on which the Government might have his support. Two of the St. Legers, it will be remembered, were claimants for the Doneraile title. Townshend, after playing with both, had recommended one of them, though the decision had been postponed. Shannon recommended the other, who was his own cousin. Mr. St. Leger St. Leger must be created Lord Doneraile. Mr. Denham Jephson, of Mallow, must have a pension of 600*l.* a year. Mr. Lysaght must be governor of Cork, with the rank of major-general. Mr. James Dennis, M.P. for Youghal, must be Prime Sergeant, or Attorney or Solicitor-general, whichever office should first fall vacant.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Townshend, member for Cork, must be a Commissioner of the Revenue; and the Dean of Cork must have a bishopric on the first opportunity.

Lord Shannon, the Viceroy wrote, 'was extremely candid and explicit.' He went to the point without circumlocution. His ultimate attitude was to depend on the treatment which he received; but he promised at any rate to stand by Government for one session. The Viceroy 'pleaded hard' 'for 400*l.* a year for Mr.

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never more to have any dealings with the Castle, that paid so little regard to engagements. *He had been treated extremely ill by Lord Frederick Campbell in Lord Townshend's time.*—'Harcourt to Lord North, July 8, 1774. Most private and confidential.'

<sup>1</sup> Dennis was made Prime Sergeant in 1774.

Jephson, but Lord Shannon said he could not prevail on Mr. Jephson to accept less than 600*l.* 'Lord Shannon,' Harcourt concluded, 'is very powerful, and it may be well to secure his support.'

While the Viceroy was being introduced to the mysteries of corruption, his secretary, Colonel de Blaquiere, was passing through an ordeal of a more fiery kind. The secretary being the channel through which applications for favours generally passed, Irish society was anxious to learn the qualifications of the new arrival. Mr. Beauchamp Bagenal, member for Carlow, a notorious duellist, with a reputation almost European, wrote to De Blaquiere for leave of absence for a relation who was with his regiment in America. De Blaquiere replied politely that to give leave to officers on service did not lie within the Viceroy's province. To his extreme surprise, Bagenal instantly challenged him. When Irish gentlemen made requests they were to be granted. Inability was no answer. De Blaquiere understood the situation in a moment. He had no knowledge of his fire-eating antagonist, nor had he dreamt of offending him; but in compliance with the universal sentiment of the whole kingdom, he saw that he must acquiesce. They met the next morning at the thorn-trees in the Phoenix, the usual trysting place. At Mr. Bagenal's request, they were placed 'nearer than usual.' De Blaquiere fired in the air. His adversary took a deliberate aim; his pistol missed fire; he recocked it a second and again a third time, with the same result. De Blaquiere advised him to look



at his flint. He rapped the edge of it with a key, and drew the trigger once more, but once more unsuccessfully.

'At the colonel's request Mr. Bagenal then changed his flint.' This time the pistol went off, the ball passing through the colonel's hat and grazing his temple. De Blaquiere took his second pistol, and was about to fire in the air again. Bagenal graciously insisted that he should aim at him. De Blaquiere said he had no quarrel with Mr. Bagenal, and could not think of it. Mr. Bagenal 'behaved with great politeness and intrepidity,' entreating that the colonel would not refuse him the honour of, &c. &c. It was in vain. De Blaquiere would not do him the honour at all. Bagenal would have made a new quarrel of it, but the seconds interfered. It was agreed that De Blaquiere had behaved 'astonishingly well.' The affair ended, and the colonel was the most popular secretary that had ever held office in Dublin.<sup>1</sup>

Preliminaries over, it was now time for business. Townshend's operations in Parliament had been frightfully costly. The Treasury was 300,000*l.* in arrear. The revenue was falling off, owing to the stoppage of the colonial trade. The expenditure seemed to admit of no reduction, except in the Pension List, but in this direction there was small likelihood of reform. The King was alive to the impropriety of granting pensions in Ireland, but was less scrupulous with his own relations. North, with acknowledged reluctance, had to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Harcourt to the Earl of Rochford, March 4, 1773.'

inform Lord Harcourt that the King had determined to place the Queen of Denmark on the Irish establishment.<sup>1</sup> It had been found necessary to suspend all payments except to the army. Some provision must be made before the meeting of Parliament. From the earliest times Irish patriotism had clamoured against the absentees. Popularity might be acquired, the revenue might be increased, and a real injury brought in the way of redress, if the remarkable lords and gentlemen who had for generations been receiving their incomes for duties unperformed were to be made to choose between residence and parting with a tenth of their spoils to the State. The remaining nine-tenths they might still keep to themselves.

Lord North gave his cordial approval. The central fountain of Irish misery had been for the moment recognized by him. Those in whose behalf the land of Ireland had been taken from its owners to provide better government for the people, had forgotten as much as if it had never existed, that any such obligation attached to them. A faint far off glimmer of the truth had broken upon an English Prime Minister. As there was no land tax in Ireland, the absentees, in fact, contributed nothing for those vast possessions of theirs. It was time to call upon them.

The tax was to have been proposed as a Government measure at the autumn Irish session. Unluckily the design leaked out prematurely, and was received in England with a shout of indignation. Great English

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord North to Harcourt, March 29, 1773. Most secret.'

noblemen conceived apparently that they did Ireland too much honour already in consenting to own part of her soil. The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Bessborough, Lord Rockingham, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Fitzpatrick of Upper Ossory, entered an ironical protest. 'They had estates in England as well as in Ireland,' they said. 'They could not reside on both, and they were not to be punished for exercising their natural right to reside where they pleased.' In days when high offices of State were held as sinecures, when pluralism was permitted in the Church, and duties were held to be adequately discharged when one man did the work and another received the pay for it, landlords might naturally be surprised when brought to account so sharply. 'I hear,' wrote Lord North, 'that Lord Shelburne and some others declare that a Minister deserves to be impeached who advises his majesty to return such a bill to Ireland. Lord Mansfield has told some of the Cabinet in confidence that he thinks we are in a scrape, from which he would advise us to get out as soon as possible. If way is given to this measure, we may expect similar proposals from all our colonies, who will be earnest to load with impositions such of their countrymen as prefer to reside in Great Britain.'

'Notwithstanding the clamour,' Lord North said he was prepared to stand by his proposition on certain conditions. The Absentee Tax was part of a general scheme, by which Townshend's reforms were to be made permanent realities, and the Irish revenue, especially the hereditary branch of it, was to be pro-

tected from peculation. This must be the work of the Irish Parliament, and if fairly taken up and carried through, would enable him to encounter Lord Shelburne's and his friends' displeasure.

But 'nothing less,' he said, 'than consenting to the whole, can enable us to stand the odium of assenting to so Anti-British a measure. We must be able to say we found Ireland 400,000*l.* in debt, and running annually 120,000*l.* in arrears; that a plan was sent over by the Irish Parliament which would provide for the debt, and render the income for the future equal to the establishment; that the tax on absentees was so blended with the rest of the plan, that whatever we might think of it separately, we could not resist it without risking the whole. If the Irish gentlemen adopt your proposals, I for one shall be ready to meet all this noise and clamour.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord North was really in earnest, but neither his wishes nor his courage were shared by the rest of the Cabinet. Absenteeism had been for centuries the popular grievance of Ireland. Now at length, when it was about to be attacked, Ireland seemed scarcely to know its own mind. The absentees were powerful through their property. Lord Bessborough, one of the five protesting lords, commanded the great Ponsonby interest. Worried by letters from England, perplexed by the division among his Irish advisers, and though himself in favour of the tax, without resolution to stand by it, Harcourt considered he would best consult Lord

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord North to Harcourt, October 29, 1773.'

North's comfort if he could quietly let the matter drop, and use the Irish Opposition to get rid of it. It was a delicate manœuvre. Constant in little else, Irish politicians never varied in their jealousy and suspicion of England. Absenteeism had been valuable to them as a grievance while it could be used against the British connection—more useful, perhaps, for this object, while it flourished unchecked, than if diminished or assailed by England itself. While England was ready to offer an Absentee Tax, they hesitated whether to receive it. If they were allowed to suppose that England was withdrawing it, their eagerness would infallibly revive.

The Viceroy opened the Parliament on the 26th of October. His speech was looked for with anxiety. Would or would not the Absentee Tax be mentioned in it? The speech was general—the subject was not touched on.

'I admire your lordship's fortitude in supporting the tax,' the Viceroy wrote to Lord North, 'and value your kindness. The opinion of some of the wisest and most experienced men in this kingdom, the general wishes of the people for half a century past, and the exigencies of the Government, led me to press it on your lordship. This, however, like every other mode of taxation, must naturally irritate those whose hitherto untaxed estates would principally be affected by it, and be attended with inconveniences, though inadequate to the advantages it must produce. Not to embarrass your lordship, as soon as I saw how things were going, with the help of our friends here, I have obstructed the progress of

the tax for the present. We mean to allow it to be moved in the House by a certain wild inconsistent gentleman,<sup>1</sup> who has signified such to be his intention. This will be sufficient to damn the measure, though no other means be employed against it.’<sup>2</sup>

‘Other means,’ however, were not neglected. ‘The letter of the five lords,’<sup>3</sup> Lord Harcourt said, he could have used with effect, if he had wished the bill to pass, to create exasperation against the absentees. ‘Having, or at least wishing, to give up that object,’ he had tried to spread a fear that an Absentee Tax might be a preliminary to a general Land Tax. And if he could only appear neutral, if he could only persuade the House of Commons that he had no wishes save that they should decide entirely for themselves, ‘such was their capricious instability, that he imagined this much-sought-for boon would die of itself.’<sup>4</sup>

To create the desired impression some active steps were necessary. Though the measure was not yet formally before the House, it had been already touched upon. De Blaquiere, ready for any emergency in field or council, rose to speak upon it. For himself he said he was a warm advocate of a proposal which he believed would be the salvation of Ireland, but he had been staggered by the variety of opinions which he had lately heard. They had not convinced him; he adhered to

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<sup>1</sup> The journals do not permit the identification of this gentleman.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Harcourt to Lord North, November 9.’

<sup>3</sup> The protest of the Duke of Devonshire, &c.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

his own impression ; but he desired the House to understand that the administration would be guided entirely by the judgment of the Irish Parliament. They wished not to lead but to follow. The wisdom of the House would alone influence the Government, and should determine his own personal conduct. He laid his heart upon their table, and he placed himself at their disposition : 'under the strange revolution of sentiment which the subject had undergone, he said that it should surprise no one if he and his best friend divided on different sides of the House.'

Lord North meanwhile assisted the illusion. He had replied to the five protesting noblemen that the Absentee Tax was part of a scheme for the re-organization of Irish finance, and as such he intended to support it. The answer gave universal satisfaction in Dublin. Here at any rate was a really honest English minister. 'The generality of people took another turn.' The fear of the Land Tax might perhaps be chimerical. The Absentee Tax after all was a desirable one, and England evidently desired to carry it. Towards the end of the month the Viceroy began to fear that his part had been overacted, and that he might be unable to prevent the bill from being carried 'without betraying a degree of inconsistency which might be prejudicial to his majesty's affairs.'<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy assumed in his letters that Lord North agreed with him in the desire that the measure should be checked. Lord North's own expressions show rather that his own personal wish was to see

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, November 22. Private.'

it successful, and regretted sincerely the English opposition. He complained that the Irish were cutting their own throats by hesitating about it. 'The lords and gentlemen who had estates in Ireland and reside here,' he wrote on the 23rd of November, 'have held a meeting and retained Mr. Dunning and Mr. Lee to plead before the Privy Council. The city of London are preparing their Recorder for the same purpose. I do not fear the eloquence of these gentlemen so much as the universal prejudice which prevails against the measure, and the want of argument to defend it and to reconcile people's minds to it.'<sup>1</sup>

Amidst cross purposes in which Lord North and a handful of the Irish members were alone honest, the question came directly before the House of Commons on the 25th of November. 'The wild inconsistent gentleman,' to whom the conduct of the measure had been relegated that he might destroy it, moved in the usual language of vague vituperation that it was expedient that a tax should be imposed upon Absentee landowners. This was at once rejected as too indefinite. Mr. Oliver, member for Limerick, proposed that a tax of two shillings in the pound should be laid on all net rents and profits payable to persons who did not reside in Ireland six months in the year. On this the debate was described as 'very warm and able.' The usual combinations were broken up. Pery, Flood, Tisdall, Bushe, Longfield, Dennis, the popular leaders of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord North to the Earl of Harcourt, November 23. Most private and confidential.'



Opposition, were strongly in favour of the motion. The patrician pseudo-patriots, the landed magnates, who were allied with the English aristocracy, John Ponsoby, Tom Conolly, Sir Charles Bingham, and the members returned by the Duke of Leinster spoke on the side of the party who were looked on as satellites of the Castle. The equity of the tax was admitted universally. The Opposition turned 'on the impolicy of irritating against Ireland people of high rank in England, the probability that it would lower the value of land, that the absentees would throw their estates upon the market, and that Ireland would be invaded by flights of foreign purchasers. Lord Harcourt's treacherous suggestions too were not forgotten. 'They did unanimously and in the most violent manner inveigh against the insidious and deep designs of the English Government to introduce by these means a general Land Tax.'

Blaquiere spoke again to protest against so unjust a suspicion. Flood argued, and the Attorney-general with him, that if an Absentee Tax was adopted, other taxes could be taken off; and that Ireland would be no loser by the sale of the absentees' estates. 'They would be sold probably in small portions to Irish gentlemen of moderate means, and produce that division of property and residence of proprietors which the legislature ought to desire.' Pery, the Speaker, urged, with great justice, that the absentees, though paying ten per cent. on their income, would still contribute less to the Irish revenue than the resident gentry who were bur-

dened with the Customs and Excise. At two in the morning the House divided, and the motion was lost by 120 to 106. . . . 'Thus,' wrote Lord Harcourt, 'the long-expected measure which for ages has been the constant topic of their discourse, the warmest object of their complaints and wishes, and still within these three months considered as too important an acquisition ever to be hoped for by their country, has been rejected by a majority of fourteen.'

Had he been as eager for the success of the attempt as he avowedly had manœuvred to defeat it, he could not have spoken more bitterly of a Parliament, which, for once, and with a small effort, he might have persuaded to do right. 'Such an instance,' he said, 'of caprice and instability is, perhaps, hardly to be met with, and will mark the temper of the gentlemen of this country which every Lord-Lieutenant has to encounter.'

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Harcourt to Lord North, November 26.'

## SECTION III.

AN Act which would have induced the London Companies to part with their estates, and have either compelled the absentees to return or have led them to the same alternative, would, on many accounts, have been of priceless service. Not the least so, that as Catholics were still unable to hold real property in Ireland, it would have recruited the ranks of the Protestant gentry with new and wholesome elements. The House of Commons were not happy over their work, and many a gentleman who had voted in the majority would have gladly seen the measure passed in spite of him. The members re-assembled the next day in ill-temper with themselves and one another. Mr. O'Neil, of Shane Castle, Lord O'Neil afterwards, though he had been an active opponent, had now changed his mind, and moved that the question should be reconsidered. At once 'a frenzy' in favour of a proposal which had been maturely debated and deliberately rejected 'seemed suddenly to possess every member present.' 'Mr. Flood was violent and able in a degree surpassing everything which he had uttered before. It appeared as if he meant to crush to destruction the Duke of Leinster's party and Mr. Ponsonby, against whom he made such a personal attack as the poor gentleman would never recover.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Harcourt to Lord North, November 27.'

‘With a satisfaction that he could ill express,’ the Viceroy was able to assure Lord North three days later that all was again over, and this time finally. He had discovered, or thought he had discovered, that sinister influences were at work under the surface, and that the opposition to the bill and the effort to reinstate it was due rather to political faction than to any care for Ireland’s welfare. There was again a nine hours’ debate, and at the end of it the motion for reconsideration was rejected without a division.

‘We last night,’ reported the Viceroy on the 30th, ‘defeated the boldest and deepest attack made on the administration of both countries, and conducted, surprised as you may be to hear it, by his majesty’s Attorney-general. We laboured with all our might to save appearances in the conduct of those faithful friends of the administration who were obliged to adopt to a certain extent the other side of the question.’<sup>1</sup>

Most brilliant and never sufficiently to be admired dexterity. A difficulty had been got rid of which might have raised differences between the Cabinet and its English friends, while the Irish Government had gained the credit of seeming to favour an important popular measure. Lord North’s congratulations were warmer than might have been expected from his previous language. Ireland’s great measure had been thrown out by Ireland herself, and still more satisfactorily, ‘without any promises of peerage or pension.’ ‘Your Excellency’s campaign,’ said the premier, ‘has

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<sup>1</sup> ‘To Lord North, November 30.’

been most glorious and successful. The Irish Government will now be carried on with credit and tranquillity. His majesty is extremely pleased with you.' <sup>1</sup>

His majesty probably knew as much about the matter as his ministers told him. The secret history, if any one cares to look further into so dirty a business, appears to have been this. Lord Rockingham had supposed that Lord North really desired the Absentee Tax to be carried, and had, therefore, entirely irrespective of whether the measure was good or bad, advised his friends to oppose it. The truth had come to be suspected in Ireland, and a change of front had been attempted too late. 'If,' wrote the Viceroy, 'the marquis and his friends pretended to suppose you are greatly hurt and disappointed at what has happened in Ireland, they ought not to be undeceived. The more that idea prevails, the greater credit and honour will be derived from it, and the shame and disgrace will fall to the share of others. On the whole, the late event, which could have no other object than throwing everything into confusion, has proved fortunate. It has strengthened the hands of the administration, and has afforded matter of caution against the machinations of restless and ambitious men.' <sup>2</sup>

Successes dishonestly gained seldom come to much. Political secrets known to many are never secrets long, and the Viceroy's expected tranquillity for the rest of the session proved an illusion. Once more the House of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord North to Lord Harcourt, December 9.'

<sup>2</sup> 'The Earl of Harcourt to Lord North, December 15.'

Commons was set vibrating on the vital question of the initiation of money bills. Blackstone had just commended the jealousy with which the English Commons maintained their privileges when a grant was made to the Sovereign. That Ireland should be denied the same honour was a badge of dependency; and the meddling of the English Council with the Bills of Supply was intended and was felt as a perpetual reminder of their chains. The heads of the three Supply Bills of 1773 had been voted and sent to England as usual. The substance was satisfactory for on the loss of the Absentee Act the Customs duties had been raised to cover the deficit. But to maintain the English assumption a few verbal changes were nevertheless again introduced by the English Council, and, either by accident or mere ill-judged purpose, one of these changes was in the tea duties. Although the chests had not yet been emptied into Boston Harbour, the ominous word acted as a trumpet call to patriotism. Here at least there was no uncertainty as to England's real intentions. The familiar scenes were again enacted. Two of the Bills were unanimously rejected. The Viceroy found that it was impossible to stem the torrent. The Duke of Leinster, to recover his credit for opposing the Absentee Tax, would have rested on the negative vote and given no supplies at all. The majority, less extreme in their violence, drew the heads a second time, and sent them over. But, 'soured and inflamed' as the House was, the Viceroy had to warn the Cabinet that if altered again they would certainly again be thrown

out, and would not afterwards pass in any shape whatever.<sup>1</sup>

This was not all. The sour humour had other and juster causes which Harcourt was too ignorant to apprehend. Lord Townshend understood Ireland's case. He recognized her wrongs. He had studied her disorders, and he had thought about them with serious alarm. His letters contain the serious reflections of a high-minded and far-seeing statesman. Harcourt could look no further than the problem of the moment, the immediate measures necessary to rig an adequate majority.

While bringing up for transmission the heads of the new Money Bill the Commons presented a second complaint, which would not have been heard of had the Cabinet listened to Townshend. From the first week of the session committees had been enquiring into the meaning of the torrent of emigration which was still streaming out of Ulster to the American plantations. They had excused and covered the landlords, but England as well as the landlords was to blame. The linen trade had alarmingly decreased. The best artisans were going now because there was no work for them, and one cause at least was the artificial encouragement given to rival English manufactures, and the duties now levied on the coarse kinds of Irish linen fabrics in direct breach of the engagement for which their woollen weaving had been sacrificed.

With a temperate good sense, which shows that the

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Harcourt to Lord Rochford, December 27.'

remonstrance had been drawn by rational men instead of by tempestuous orators, the House of Commons, by the hands of the Speaker, presented their case to the Viceroy.

They had been confined by law to the manufacture of flax and hemp. They had submitted to their condition, and had manufactured those articles to such <sup>1774</sup> good purpose that at one time they had supplied sails for the whole British navy. Their English rivals had now crippled them by laying a disabling duty on their sail-cloths, in the hope of taking the trade out of their hands; but they had injured Ireland without benefiting themselves. The British market was now supplied from Holland, and Germany, and Russia, while to the Empire the result was only the ruin of Ulster and the flight of the Protestant population to America. 'If,' they said in modest irony, 'Great Britain reaped the fruits of this policy, the Commons of Ireland would behold it without repining and submit to it without complaining; but it aggravates the sense of their misfortunes to see the rivals, if not the enemies, of Great Britain in the undisturbed possession of those advantages to which they think themselves entitled on every principle of policy and justice. It is the expectation of being restored to some, if not all, of those rights, and that alone, which can justify to the people the conduct of their representatives in laying additional burdens on them. No time can be more favourable to give effect to their wishes than the present, when the public councils are directed by a Minister who has the



courage to pursue the common interest of the British Empire.' <sup>1</sup>

One more point of difference arose on another serious question. The whole country, the north especially, was still agitated. Taxes, hitherto irregularly paid, were now being collected more resolutely by the help of the increased military force; the soldiers were doing the duty of police, and when work of this kind is done by soldiers it is done always roughly and sometimes unjustly. Ireland had many times petitioned for an extension thither of the Habeas Corpus Act. Many times the heads of such a Bill had been transmitted, but had never been returned. The Habeas Corpus Act 'was held irreconcilable with the idea of a dependency,' and notice had been at last sent to the Irish Council 'to transmit the Bill no more.' <sup>2</sup> Under the pressure of outcries which had risen perhaps out of the Hearts of Steel movement and the measures taken to repress it, the House of Commons made their demand once more, and under the circumstances the Viceroy threw the responsibility of the refusal on England.

On the great Money Bill question the Cabinet had this time to yield. Where feeling ran so strong, a majority was too expensive an article to be purchased, except occasionally. Compliance even with Lord Shannon would not secure support in these exceptional cases. The trade complaints were doggedly dismissed, to add to the pile of wrong which was fast rising to a

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals, Ireland, December 25, 1773.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord Harcourt to Lord Rochford, March 6, 1774.'

height when England would be compelled to attend to it. The Habeas Corpus Act was refused, as Harcourt knew it must be, on grounds which throw light on the practical working of the Irish Constitution. It was held 'a solecism in politics to make the constitution of a colony the same as that of the mother country.' 'The Catholics must either be admitted to the protection of it or be excluded.' If they were admitted the peace of the country could not be secured. If they were excluded four-fifths of the people would be deprived of their constitutional rights. A power of suspension must exist somewhere to provide for emergencies. In England that power was in the Parliament. In Ireland, where Parliament met only in alternate years, it must vest in Government; and if the 'innovation' was sanctioned and the Act conceded, the Government would be in continual danger, either of provoking the Catholics by suspending it or of provoking the Protestants by refusing to suspend it.<sup>1</sup>

The Commons acquiesced, but finding their other grievances unheeded, acquiesced with desponding disapproval. The usual thanks were given to the Viceroy at the end of the session, not however without the suggestion of an amendment, which, though it was rejected, expressed the thoughts of the better part of the country.

'But although in compliance with the modern practice of Parliament, and from a veneration of your Excellency's private virtues, which we sincerely respect, we thus address your Excellency at the close of this

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Harcourt to the Earl of Rochford, March 6.' S.P.O.

session, yet we cannot but recollect with the deepest concern that under your Excellency's administration taxes have been imposed on our constituents in this time of profound peace more grievous in their nature, and greater in their extent, than have been required or granted in this country for a century past, merely to support overloaded and, in many parts, unnecessary establishments, and particularly an odious and enormous list of absentee pensions and places; so that this kingdom is now not only incapacitated from contributing to the support of a war, but even debilitated in peace by the impoverishment and consequent emigration of our people. A system of taxes the more intolerable to a free people from the unconstitutional mode of levying them with the assistance of the military power, first attempted and finally effected in this kingdom under your Excellency's administration.' <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, June 1, 1774.

## SECTION IV.

THE student of the Parliamentary records of Ireland still discovers two parties there—a party of noisy, self-called patriots, catching at imaginary wrongs <sup>1774</sup> for factious or interested purposes; and a party of reasonable men, in each session unfortunately growing smaller, who understood what was amiss with their country, and were trying in vain to make the Government listen to them. It was not yet too late to arrest the current of disaffection could England have been persuaded to act fairly. Lord North and Lord Harcourt knew that the Absentee Bill ought to have been passed. They could have passed it with ordinary courage. Every English administration was aware of the iniquity of the Pension List. Hardly any single Minister would have defended in private the prostitution of Irish patronage to buy corrupt support in the House of Commons. Could Cabinets have retained their conscience in their collective capacity, and determined resolutely to do what was right in Ireland and nothing else, they would have met even now with few serious difficulties. They might have gone for a year or two without the supplies; but there yet remained in the Parliament a knot of upright men who would have stood by any Government that was acting resolutely on true principles. Lord Townshend would have won his battle without bribery, and his reforms would have

remained, had he been allowed to commence with restoring Free Trade.

The worst effect of a vicious system is the difficulty of leaving it, the difficulty of seeing that it ought to be left. English statesmen were allowing much which they knew to be wrong in Ireland. The worst wrongs of all—the restrictions on industry—had continued so long that their character could no longer be recognized. Both sections in the Parliament were giving trouble—English Cabinets thought unreasonable trouble—and they did not care to look closely at the grounds of complaint. The better sort of men could be silenced only by abolishing commercial abuses and stirring hornets' nests at Bristol and Manchester. It was easier a great deal to lead patriots by the nose by the old methods which had never been known to fail. Not therefore to making crooked things straight, but, as usual, to the better organizing a majority, the labour of the Castle was addressed in the recess.

Hely Hutchinson had continued faithful since Townshend had gained him over, but he was still fed of 'the chameleon's dish.' His wife was not yet ennobled. He himself was Prime Sergeant and Privy Councillor, and had obtained besides a sinecure of 1800*l.* a year, but his sons were unprovided for, and his claims were still waiting for adjustment. Mr. Flood had shown his capacity of being mischievous, but he had let the Viceroy know that he was willing to come to terms. He had supported the Government on the whole during the last session, and Harcourt had been looking out anxiously

for means of providing for him.<sup>1</sup> There were unusual difficulties, for Flood was not at the bar, and the lines of the professions were therefore closed against him. In June 1774 Dr. Andrews, the Provost of Trinity College, died. By statute the office could be held only by an ecclesiastic. But a dispensing power lay in the Crown. The Viceroy saw in the vacancy an opportunity of satisfying one at least of the expectants. From a disinterested desire, as he professed, to help the Viceroy out of his embarrassment with Flood, Hely Hutchinson, who had been himself educated at Trinity, intimated that if he might have the Provostship he would retire from the bar, and would place the offices which he already held at the Viceroy's disposition. He would lose a professional income of nearly 5000*l.* a year, 'but his taste for literature and the possession of a considerable estate in the country disposed him to a sacrifice.' He was Prime Sergeant, and he was Alnager besides,<sup>2</sup> with a salary for doing nothing of 1800*l.* a year. Both these places would be vacated. Lord Shannon might be gratified by making his friend Mr. Dennis Prime Sergeant, Mr. Flood might be Alnager with a thousand a year; the Provost's place being worth but two thousand, Hely Hutchinson might himself reasonably keep the other eight hundred; and his two sons, for whom he had been anxious before, being now

<sup>1</sup> 'Among the many embarrassments of my situation, I have found none more difficult than to make a proper provision for Mr. Flood.'—  
'Lord Harcourt to Lord Rochford,

June 19, 1774.'

<sup>2</sup> An officer whose duty, discharged by deputy, was to measure cloth by the ell, and fix the assize.

boys of sixteen and seventeen, might be appointed to the office of 'Searchers of the Port of Strangford, now vacant, with a salary of a thousand a year.' By this little arrangement the Viceroy would be able to gratify three considerable members of the House of Commons, please Lord Shannon, and greatly strengthen the Administration.<sup>1</sup>

The Viceroy was well contented. He discovered that 'the situation of a university in the metropolis required more experience and knowledge of the world than was to be found in a clergyman.' The parties interested were communicated with, and all were satisfied except one, the person in whose behalf the changes were professedly to be made. Flood could not conceal his indignant disappointment. That he, the first orator in Ireland, who had blazed for ten years as a star of the first magnitude, should be put off with the place of Alnager, shorn too of half its profits, approached to insult. Lord Frederick Campbell had trifled with him. De Blaquiere had promised him, he said, 'the first great office that should be vacant,' and was now trifling with him also. He, too, had set his heart on the Provostship of Trinity. He, not Hutchinson, ought to have it.

Harcourt, to whom he poured out his complaints, pointed out to him that Hutchinson was resigning two important offices in exchange. 'And have I resigned nothing?' whimpered Flood with pretty *naïveté*. 'Have not I made as great or a greater sacrifice, my popularity

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<sup>1</sup> ' Lord Harcourt to Lord Rochford, June 19, 1774.'

and reputation, which I have risked in support of a Government that now treats me with contempt?' He flung away in a rage. He would have no more to do with the Castle, he said. His treatment would be a lesson to everybody. But for him Lord Harcourt would have been as badly treated as his predecessors. 'For himself, he was now reduced to a most humiliating and perplexed state, either to become a humble suppliant for favour, or give up all hopes of it, and submit tamely to every species of ridicule and contempt.'

For a politician to sell his services was not contemptible, it appeared; the real disgrace was to sell them and be cheated of the price. The Provostship was a situation for life. The object was to find something for Flood which could be taken away if he fell off, something which would be a security for his good behaviour. 'To have made Mr. Flood Provost of Trinity,' Harcourt said, 'would have placed him in a station of dependence that might have made him extremely troublesome and formidable.' Prudence, however, required that he should not be flung back into opposition. The Viceroy enquired what his own views were. Flood intimated, as a matter of favour, that he would consent to accept a Vice-Treasurership. The three Vice-Treasurerships were sinecure offices with salaries attached to them of 3500*l.* a year. They were reserved in general for special favourites; unfortunately, for persons out of Ireland. Harcourt mildly remonstrated. Mr. Flood might be contented to begin at a lower level. Finding Flood immovable, he consented at last to



recommend him. 'It may be better,' he said, in reporting the conversation, 'to secure Mr. Flood almost at any expense than risk an opposition which may be most dangerous and mischievous.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord North would have been willing, but he had England to care for as well as Ireland. 'My objection,' he replied, 'to Mr. Flood's having a Vice-Treasurership is that I fear much blame *here*, and no small difficulty in carrying on the King's business, if I consent to part with the disposal of these offices, which have been so long and uniformly bestowed on members of the British Parliament. I acknowledge the Irish members had a right to complain when two gentlemen who had no permanent connection with Ireland were appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer and Master of the Rolls for life, but . . . .' In short, Harcourt was not to think of it. The Cabinet had great respect for Mr. Flood, but it could not be done.<sup>2</sup>

As a possible alternative Lord North suggested reviving the old office of President of Munster, with a salary of 2000*l.* a year. Harcourt objected that if the Presidency was made a reality it would give Flood too much consequence; and to revive it as a sinecure would be a job too gross even for Ireland. It would be less objectionable to raise the salary of some insignificant place already subsisting, or to give Flood a handsome pension. Mr. Flood denounced the pension system generally, but would doubtless accept one for himself. A

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord North, July 8. Most private and confidential.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord North to the Earl of Harcourt, July 23.'

provision of one kind or another must be made for him 'on mere grounds of economy.' 'Was it worth while to hazard the stamp and other duties so lately effected, and put an able and active man at the head of a numerous opposition to save a thousand a year for one life, and that perhaps not a good one, besides the other mischief which a desperate and disappointed man might devise?'<sup>1</sup>

After much deliberation, the Cabinet at length consented that Flood should have his Vice-Treasurership; but now a difficulty arose with Flood himself. The Vice-Treasurership was held 'during pleasure.' Flood said he had no doubt of Lord Harcourt's good disposition towards him, but Harcourt could not answer for his successor, who might dismiss him without ceremony from an office of precarious tenure. He had been promised 'the first great employment that should be vacant. He ought to have succeeded to the Provostship or to some situation which would have placed him on an equal footing with the great officers of the Crown.'

The Viceroy said that Flood had himself named the Vice-Treasurership. He had done his best to oblige him, but he would go no further. Flood must accept what was now offered, 'or the Castle would hold itself discharged of its promises.'

'When he saw that his arts and his arguments made no impression, he said that out of his consideration for Lord Harcourt he would waive his claims to a more desirable situation.' He would accept a Vice-Trea-

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord North, September 3.'

surership, provided it involved no charge on Ireland; provided, *i. e.*, his salary was paid from the English Exchequer.

This was too much. The Viceroy said he could not ask Lord North to relieve the Establishment at the expense of Great Britain. The negotiation was suspended. 'Mr. Flood had so high an opinion of his Parliamentary abilities that he thought England must submit to anything.' The vacant office was hung up as a prize for good behaviour to keep the patriots in order for the next year. The Viceroy particularly begged that it might not be given away, 'because it would deprive him of the means of making arrangements that would remove any material difficulty that could arise in the ensuing session of Parliament.'<sup>1</sup>

Months now were allowed to pass, Flood believing that as the time of danger approached nearer the  
1775 Viceroy would yield. It would have been a proud position for him could he have told his countrymen that he had compelled England to engage his services without entailing fresh burdens upon them. Finding the Castle gave no sign, he re-opened the correspondence himself, and intimated his willingness to accept. He did not want money, but he was sensitive of ridicule. He had offended his patriot allies by the course which he had already taken. It must not be said of him that he had been duped out of his reward. He consented to take his place when Parliament next opened among the avowed 'servants of the Crown.' He had been so late

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord North, September 3.'

in agreeing, however, that the session had begun before the King's letter arrived confirming his appointment, and during the first few days he was obliged to be absent from his seat. 'Till the letter arrives, in fact,' Lord Harcourt said, 'his situation is awkward enough. Since I was born I never had to deal with so difficult a man, owing principally to his high-strained ideas of his own influence and popularity.'<sup>1</sup>

As the dispute with America threatened to take a violent form, it was watched in Ireland with increasing eagerness, and when the attempt at coercion was followed by the news of Lexington and Bunker's Hill, domestic differences were suspended in the passionate anxiety with which the evolution of the drama was observed. The question in both countries was substantially the same—whether the Mother Country had a right to utilize her dependencies for her own interests irrespective of their own consent? The wrongs which America had taken arms to redress were trivial compared to the wrongs of Ireland. If America obtained free trade and self-government, the Irish might claim and hope for the same privileges, and the chains once broken in one colony might be broken in all. The Northern Presbyterians looked on the revolt as the revival of the conflict of the preceding century. They were personally interested in a struggle in which so many of their own kindred were engaged; while the Americans, alive to the value of support and sympathy

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<sup>1</sup> 'Harcourt to North, October 9, 1775.'

so near at home, had made untiring efforts to enlist Ireland in support of their cause.

The Ireland of which the Americans were thinking, the Ireland which alone as yet had a political existence, was Protestant Ireland. The Catholics might have looked on with indifference, or perhaps with pleasure, at a contest in which their enemies were destroying one another. Of them few or none had as yet sought a Transatlantic home—when they emigrated it was to France, or Austria, or Spain. America was the creation of Non-conformity, and was as yet the chosen home of principles which Catholics held most in abhorrence. To them therefore it mattered little in itself whether England got the better of her colonies or the colonies of England. But the friends of the Americans in Ireland were their own worst foes, who, but for England, would have put the penal laws in force against them. In the last war, in which their sympathies might have naturally been enlisted, part of the Catholic body had made demonstrations of loyalty. The present was a fairer opportunity of earning favour at the Protestants' expense, perhaps emancipation from their chains. The Catholic gentry and clergy came forward with an offer of a subscription, and, when their money was declined, with the earnest desire of 'two million faithful Irish hearts,' to be allowed a chance of showing their devotion to their Sovereign by taking arms in his cause.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The petition of the Catholics in Ireland in 1775 has, I believe, never been published. When I mentioned it in America I was met by a flat denial that any such petition had been presented. I therefore give this most curious and important document entire.

The offer was not accepted. 'The allegiance of the Papists,' De Blaquiere said, added nothing to the strength of Government in Parliament. The Catholic interest could command neither speech nor vote.<sup>1</sup> Their

It is addressed to Sir John de Blaquiere:—

'Sir,—We flatter ourselves that the occasion, the motives, and your goodness will engage you to excuse this trouble. As we are informed that an intended subscription among us, his majesty's affectionate, loyal, and dutiful Roman Catholic subjects of his kingdom of Ireland, to raise a fund among ourselves for encouraging recruits to enlist for H.M.'s service, was not judged necessary by Government, yet being desirous to give every assistance in our power, and to give every proof of our sincere, affectionate, and grateful attachment to the most sacred person and government of the best of kings, and justly abhorring the unnatural rebellion which has lately broken out among some of his American subjects against H.M.'s most sacred person and government, impressed with a deep sense of our duty and allegiance, and feeling ourselves loudly called on by every motive and by every tie that can affect the hearts of good and loyal subjects, we take the liberty to make on this interesting occasion a humble tender of our duty, zeal, and affection to our good and gracious King; and we humbly presume to lay at his feet two millions of loyal, faith-

ful, and affectionate hearts and hands, unarmed indeed, but zealous, ready and desirous to exert themselves strenuously in defence of H.M.'s most sacred person and government against all his enemies, of what denomination soever, in any part of the world where they may be; and to exert in an active manner a loyalty and an obedience which hitherto, though always unanimous and unalterable, from our particular circumstances and situation have been restrained within passive and inactive bounds—a loyalty which we may justly say is, and always was, as the dial to the sun, true though not shone upon. And we take the liberty to request, sir, that you will be so good as to represent to his Excellency our Lord Lieutenant these our dispositions and sentiments, which we well know to be those also of all our fellow Roman Catholic Irish subjects, with an humble request to his Excellency that, if he think proper, he may be so good as to lay them before his majesty.

'Fingall, Trimleston, J. Barnewall, B. Barnewall, &c. &c. 121.'

Enclosed in a letter from Harcourt to Lord Rochford, September 30, 1775.

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir John Blaquiere to Lord North, October 11, 1775.'

demonstrations, and the gracious reception of them, inflamed rather than soothed the Puritans and Presbyterians; and Harcourt, baffled after all his efforts by the effect of the American successes, looked forward to the session with great uneasiness. The Opposition were acting in concert with the English Whigs. He discovered that they meant to bring the subject of the colonies before Parliament, backed by the entire body of the Northern Protestants.<sup>1</sup> They were gaining strength rapidly, and his best chance was to press the subject to an immediate vote by introducing the subject into the speech. He complimented Ireland from the throne on her good behaviour while America was in rebellion. A friend of the Castle in moving the address invited the Commons to assure the King 'that while his Government was disturbed by a rebellion, of which they heard with abhorrence and felt with indignation, they would themselves be ever ready to show the world their devoted attachment to his sacred person.'<sup>2</sup>

Ponsonby, who recovered his patriotism when the Absentee Rents were no longer in danger, rose immediately to move an amendment. 'The Commons of Ireland, confiding in his majesty's tenderness for his

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Presbyterians of the North, who in their hearts are Americans, were gaining strength every day; and, by letters written by designing men, whom I could name, from your side of the water, have been repeatedly pressed to engage Ireland to take an adverse part in the contest, telling them

the balance of the cause and the decision of the quarrel was on this side St. George's Channel. The subject would then have been pressed upon me with such advantage as I should have had difficulty in resisting.'—'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, October 11, 1775.'

<sup>2</sup> *Commons' Journals*, 1775.

subjects, and relying on his wisdom for bringing these difficult matters to a happy issue, had been silent hitherto during the agitation of a dispute which could not but deeply affect them. Finding the event not answerable to their wishes, they would be wanting to their own interests and the general welfare if they longer hesitated to express their hopes that a difference might be amicably terminated which they feared could not be ended otherwise.'

A debate followed which lasted till the next evening. The Irish cause was openly identified with the American. Denis Daly said that if America was beaten, 30,000 English swords would impose the Irish taxes. Hussey Burgh, a rising orator, who will be heard of again, said England meant to reduce her dependencies to slavery. Flood luckily for himself was absent. Had he spoken he must have been false either to his principles or to his Castle engagements. The weight of defence was thrown on De Blaquiere, the Viceroy being unable to trust 'the independent persons' whom he had bought, on a question where feeling ran so high. 'Your thread-paper friend,' De Blaquiere told Lord North, 'lost flesh which he could not well spare' in the long protracted fight. It was uncertain to the last how the division would turn, but the first octennial Parliament was drawing near its end. De Blaquiere hinted that an adverse vote might lead to an immediate dissolution; and 'the apprehension of rotten eggs and an approaching election' turned the scale in favour of the Castle. The Viceroy said he 'never was so happy in



his life as when the question was decided;’ in the first blush of triumph he flattered himself that ‘his victory would give peace to Ireland, carry terror to America and despair to Chatham and the English malcontents.’

The keener-eyed De Blaquiere indulged in no such illusions. ‘Judging from the asperity of expression among the Outs and the avaricious coldness and jobbery among the Ins,’ he looked for a stormy session, and saw rough water on all sides.

He had reason for his fears. When the Irish Parliament consented to the increase of the army, they exacted a condition that not less than 12,000 men should always be kept in Ireland. The excuse for and motive of the augmentation was the better security of life and property, and a smaller number had been proved to be unequal to the work. Lord North now required 4000 of these troops for service in America. He offered, if Ireland wished it, to send 4000 Hessians to take their place at the cost of England.

Again, the army in America was to receive its supplies from Ireland. To keep the prices of provisions down the Viceroy was told that he must lay an embargo on the Irish ports, and shut off the farmers from other markets. This was a measure of direct spoliation, as the Viceroy acknowledged, yet it was to be imposed by sovereign authority, while he was to apply to Parliament to sanction the removal of the troops. If the removal was to be accompanied with an embargo, the Viceroy ‘confessed with shame and concern that there was not one of the confidential servants of the Crown

whom he could trust in such a matter without the risk of having the measure defeated.'<sup>1</sup> A dissolution would not mend matters. Forty Castle seats were threatened. Every loose, unprincipled member was watching to make his bargain when the Government should be in difficulties. Lord Massereene had a brother, Major Skeffington, in the House of Commons, and two nephews. Major Skeffington was a bad officer.<sup>2</sup> Massereene had applied for a colonelcy for him, and had been refused. The three votes were in consequence given against the Government on the American question. After the division Skeffington renewed his request. It was understood that unless it was granted the process would be repeated through the session. With infinite disgust the Government was obliged to yield.

'You must,' wrote De Blaquiere—these details are essential to a comprehension of the working of the Irish legislature—'you must by pension or place sink a sum of not less than 9000*l.* per annum, exclusive of the provision that may be found requisite for rewarding or indemnifying those who are connected by office with the Administration. There are no less than from thirty to forty members that if not assisted cannot secure their re-elections. Many of them hold small employments or pensions of from two to three hundred pounds a year. Their seats in the new Parliament cannot be purchased at less than 2000 guineas. Their past services entitle

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, October 17 and 23.'

<sup>2</sup> 'There is an appearance of inactivity in him which certainly ought not to be patronised.'—'To Lord North, October 27.'

them to what they now hold; and an addition of pension or salary, as circumstances may require, is scarce an adequate compensation for the advance and loss of so large a sum. Other gentlemen have had promises made them which must be fulfilled in some way. Let it suffice that for carrying on the public business a charge not less than I have stated is indispensable. I have already been obliged, with my Lord-Lieutenant's leave, to promise additional salaries or pensions to Messrs. Blakeney, Fitzgerald, Tighe, Sandford, Pennefather, O'Brien, Coghlen, Malone, Cane, and Fetherstone, most of whom were wavering in their faith.'<sup>1</sup>

With a horizon overcast and every moment growing darker, De Blaquiere, on the 23rd of November, presented the request for the removal of the troops. The embargo had been declared; the House was sullen. The American question was at once revived. Ponsonby protested. Fitzgibbon (the father) said that if Ireland refused consent the King would reconsider his course. Hussey Burgh said that Ireland ought not to help in cutting the throats of the Americans. If the principle of taxation was established against America there would be an end of Irish liberty. Consent was given, but with extreme reluctance. Hessians or Brunswickers the House flatly refused to admit; and the objection to receive them must have been serious, for Lord North had been attacked at Westminster for having proposed to supply the garrison of Ireland at the cost of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'De Blaquiere to Lord North, November 1775.' S. P. O.

British Treasury.<sup>1</sup> Was Ireland safe with her garrison reduced so far? That was a further question of which Lord North and the Viceroy were better able to feel the importance than the House of Commons. There it was believed that when the 4000 men were sent away 8000 at least would remain. Those who were behind the scenes knew, unhappily, that the truth was far otherwise. The King had insisted on better order being observed in these matters. Nothing ever remained in order in Ireland. On the 1st of November the actual number of soldiers there all told amounted but to 9200. The directions given were to pick the best men from all the regiments for the American service. The force that would remain would be a shadow. Under these circumstances Lord North appeared to think that he might as well take all the troops that could go. No sooner had he received notice that the Parliament had consented, than he sent orders to embark eight regiments instead of the six which would have made up the allotted number. Harcourt, who had endured much, replied that if eight regiments were to go, 'he must request his majesty to appoint some other person to execute a command which would be fatal to the kingdom. He described his situation 'as the most cruel and unmerited that ever fell to the share of a man whose life had been devoted to his prince.'<sup>2</sup>

Across this scandalous trifling came a fresh protest

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord North to Lord Harcourt, December 1, 1775.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, December and January 1775 and 1776.'

on the state of Irish trade. The Speaker before the Christmas recess presented one more remonstrance against the wrongs of the Irish manufacturers.

Will you at last, the Commons said in substance, repent of your misdeeds to us while there is time? We have parted with our garrison at the hazard of our safety. We have granted supplies beyond the limit of our means. May we hope in return that the light will break at length through the cloud which has so long overshadowed us? Will you understand now that the prosperity of Ireland is the strength, and not the weakness, of Ireland?

To have assented even then at the eleventh hour would have been worth more to England than all the majorities which all her wealth could purchase—but it was not to be. The Cabinet could never rise beyond the thought how with least difficulty to meet the trials of the current session. The country might continue to tread her miserable round from year to year, from century to century. They had bought Flood and they were satisfied. Unknown to them there had entered into this very Parliament, in this December, by a casual vacancy in the borough of Charlemont, a youth who had come into notice as a contributor to 'Baratariana,' more dangerous than a thousand Floods, because alone of Irish patriots he was incorruptible. In five years Henry Grattan was to wrest out of England's hands the power which she had so long abused, to give back to his country her birthright of free trade, and to give her with it the fatal privileges of constitutional self govern-

ment, which she wanted honesty to use, and which plunged her into a deeper abyss of ruin than she had escaped. His voice was first heard beside Hussey Burgh's denouncing the iniquity of the embargo. But neither could the embargo be prevented nor any measure passed of real consequence, not even those which England knew to be necessary and had confessed to be desirable.

The first question after the winter recess was the defence of the country. England was at war. Ireland was denuded of troops, the defences of her harbours in ruins, and exposed to the attacks of privateers. In this situation the Parliament offered the national remedy of a militia, and drew the heads of a Bill for transmission. The important thing was to get a force of some kind that could be relied on, and a militia at all events would have been under the control of the <sup>1776</sup> Crown. Lord North had no objection, but acting on the old and fatal maxim of 'divide et impera,' he saw in the establishment of a militia an opportunity of gratifying the Catholics and rewarding the display of their loyalty. They were willing to be enrolled; and Lord North stipulated that their enlistment must be accompanied with 'indulgences in the exercise of their religion.' Such indulgences would have followed as a matter of course, had there been no formal demand for them. But the prominent mention of a tender subject at once exasperated Protestant prejudice. Harcourt felt his way, but found that the proposal to admit the Catholics would ruin a measure which was otherwise

urgently desirable. 'There was no point,' he said, 'on which gentlemen were so sensitive, or the country in general so jealous. Nothing more was needed to throw Ireland into a flame.'<sup>1</sup> The heads of the Bill went across as they were first drawn, containing no mention of the Catholics. With an infatuation which brought rapid penalties after it the Bill was not returned, and instead of a militia which would be in the hands of the commander-in-chief, the Government were to reckon with the volunteers.

The same perversity attended the revival of the Judges' Tenure Bill. Ireland was naturally anxious for the removal of the Bench from the influence of jobbery. Townshend had recommended the change from the throne, and in Townshend's time it had been prevented only by the introduction of a clause reserving a power of removal to the British Parliament. The Irish Commons, as a last act before the dissolution, made another attempt to bring it about. The heads of the Judges' Tenure Bill were brought to the Viceroy to be sent over. Lord Harcourt, unwilling in his embarrassment to part with any influence by which he could work on the fears or hopes of the baser members of the Lower House, himself entreated the Cabinet to refuse consent.

'The state of the country duly considered,' he said, 'I am persuaded it would be very undesirable to make the commission of judges to continue during good behaviour. So many inconveniences would infallibly

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Harcourt to Lord North, February 28, 1776.

result from such a bill, that I trust it will not be deemed proper to return it to Ireland.' <sup>1</sup>

These proceedings may be described as a very effective sowing the wind, the more so as the parties concerned were innocently unconscious of what they were doing. On the 5th of April the session closed, and with it the Parliament. 'Our business ended,' De Blaquiere reported, 'with temper and satisfaction. We had a sharp debate on the address. Mr. Grattan, Mr. Bushe, and Mr. Yelverton were particularly violent; but we shamed them even in argument, and in point of numbers were so strong that they dared not divide.'<sup>2</sup>

It would be curious to know what the 'arguments' were. A case could be made on the Money Bill, on Irish rights, and the American war; but the attack turned largely on the defences of the country, the increasing debt, the corrupt expenditure, the monstrous Pension List, and the loading the establishment with sinecures as the price of political support. On these points what answers could have been made which were not lies?

Harcourt's term of office was now running out. One duty only remained to him—to superintend the general election; to see the new Parliament installed, and its composition tested by the election of a Speaker. It

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Harcourt to Lord Weymouth, February 5, 1776.' The Harcourt correspondence in the State Paper Office is preserved in copies made and annotated by Sir John Blaquiere. To the present production of his chief he appends as a remark: I was in the country when this extraordinary letter was written. J. B.

<sup>2</sup> 'To Lord North, April 7.'



was then to be prorogued for fifteen months. The Viceroy was to go to England. His successor was not yet determined on. He might himself, perhaps, be asked to return, and if Lord North so wished it he was ready to sacrifice himself, or, as he put it, 'he was not disposed to turn his face from the evil, or suffer the bitter cup to pass from his lips.'

De Blaquiere had already explained the steps which the election rendered necessary. The estimate fell far short of the requirements. Eighteen members of the Lower House insisted that they had earned peerages. If they received their coronets, they undertook to fill the seats which they had vacated with men on whom the Castle might rely. But they refused to be paid in promises. They must have their price on the spot. Besides these, de Blaquiere recommended a long list of persons for pensions and places. He represented compliance as 'indispensable for the public service.' And here again delay was unpermitted, for, as he observed, 'Many of our grants are always mortgaged in part for the purchase money of our seats.'<sup>1</sup> 'I have but three words for you,' he wrote in a companion note to Secretary Robinson—'Dispatch, dispatch, dispatch, for the existence of your future views depends upon it.'

Under these influences the memorable Parliament was chosen which was to revolutionise the Irish Constitution. Little could its future career have been conjectured from its first performance. It assembled in force to choose its Speaker. Pery, as before, was the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sir John Blaquiere to Lord North, May 4.'

government candidate. Ponsonby was again the choice of the patriots. It appeared, when the trial came, that Lord Shannon and the Elies had again fallen off. The Duke of Leinster had forgotten the old feud, and supported Ponsonby with all his weight. But corruption for the present proved too strong for aristocracy and patriotism combined. Pery was elected by 141 votes to 98, and the Castle won a glorious victory in its own imagination.

Public confidence, which had been shaken, was restored. Government debentures rose from 90 to 101. Lord Harcourt not being required to drink any deeper of his 'bitter cup,' resigned with an aureole about his head, and returned to England, to fall into the Nuneham well. De Blaquiere, who resigned with him, preferred to remain in a country where his composure under fire had made him popular, and where he conceived that by his political dexterity he had fixed the authority of Government on a basis of rock.

'In retiring from my public station in this kingdom,' he wrote to Lord North, 'permit me most sincerely to congratulate your Lordship on the unshaken loyalty and perfect tranquillity that have been preserved in it at a period when so much pains had been taken to lessen the one and disturb the other. I mention the situation of this kingdom with so much confidence and pleasure because there is not a part of his majesty's dominions where I would be so happy to spend the remainder of a private life as in Ireland.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sir John Blaquiere to Lord North, July 4, 1776.'

## BOOK VI.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF RETRIBUTION.

##### SECTION I.

**N**INETY YEARS had passed since Aghrim and the surrender of Limerick had laid the Irish race once more prostrate at the feet of England. The time <sup>1776</sup> had come, as it comes with all nations and with all men, when England was to be called to account for the trust which had been committed to her. She had sown with poison weeds the draggled island which lay in the rear of her imperial domain. The crop had sprung up and ripened, and now the harvest was to be gathered. When circumstances compel a strong nation to deprive a neighbour of political independence, that nation is bound to confer on the inferior country the only reparation in its power—to share with it to the utmost its own material advantages—to justify its assumption of superiority by the equity and wisdom of its administration. England had discharged her sovereign duties to Ireland by leaving her to anarchy masked behind a caricature of the forms of her own constitution. With

an insolent mockery she had refused her request for incorporation in the empire. She had left her the name of a separate kingdom and a separate nationality as her excuse for withholding from her the equal rights to which she was entitled. The nationality which she insisted on preserving was to become a thorn in England's side—the instrument of a merited humiliation.

The Protestant colonists implanted as her representatives by James and Cromwell, finding that transportation to Ireland implied the sacrifice of their rights as English citizens, became Irish in sentiment, and trod again, step for step, the same road which had been travelled by the Norman conquerors. They adopted Irish habits; they adopted the Irish animosity against their oppressors. In the collapse of nobler purpose they had come to regard their position as an opportunity for plunder, and to consider the proceeds of the soil, whether in the shape of public revenue or private rent, as so much booty to be seized and divided.

In the misappropriation of the revenue England herself set the ignoble example. The Irish Parliament became simply the arena for the partition of the spoil. The English Cabinet retained the Pension List for corruption or for questionable court favourites. They retained the high offices of State as sinecures, to keep in good humour their Parliamentary friends at home. As the price of connivance, they left to the Irish leaders all else that could be collected as cess or tax to be absorbed by themselves, or to be disposed of among their dependents or kinsmen. Public interests mean-

while went to ruin. The army was neglected, the police was unexistent. Smugglers, houghers, Whiteboys, and women ravishers pursued their calling unmolested, till familiarity with their atrocities raised them into the rank of national institutions. The harbour defences crumbled and disappeared, the military stores were stolen. From Dublin Castle to the lowest custom-house the public service was pervaded with peculation, the Viceroy's themselves playing the first part in the disgraceful spectacle—superior, doubtless, themselves to unworthy influences, but setting the example of buying the consciences of those who were nearest to them.

The least evil of bad government is the immediate consequence. The curse of it is the effect upon the characters of the people who grow to manhood in so detestable an atmosphere.

The attempts of George the Third to introduce reform had only shown the hopelessness of the problem. Townshend and Harcourt had broken the power of the great nobles, but they had broken it only by more indiscriminate and lavish bribery. They had taught the so-called independent members that the service of the Castle was a safer road to fortune than the service of the Leinsters and Ponsonbies. The discovery once made, the hunger grew by what it fed on, till corruption became a thing of course, and honour and principle were words which ceased to have a meaning, except in rounding the periods of some fluent orator who laughed at them in his sleeve.

In their social relations the Irish gentry were

scarcely more satisfactory than in politics. Ownership of soil had descended from a time when the lordship of a manor was a military command. Services due to the Crown, both in England and Ireland, had long been compounded for; and the distinction between real and personal property, so far as positive duty was supposed to attach to one rather than the other, was fast disappearing. In England the spirit of the old form survived the letter of it. The great families remained objects of affectionate allegiance to the tenantry. They administered justice; they officered the army and militia; they commanded the yeomanry; they represented the counties, and in that capacity had been the guardians of public liberty. Placed by station and fortune beyond vulgar temptation, they held in check the adventurers who took up politics as a road to personal preferment, and by the genuine integrity and patriotism which they have carried into modern Parliaments they have alone made possible the wholesome working of the Constitution. In Ireland the form was the same; the reality was essentially different. Of the resident noblemen and gentlemen a minority retained their English character, and acted, so far as circumstances would allow them, on English principles. To them was due such progress as Ireland had made. Their estates became oases in the general wilderness, and they and their families were regarded by the peasantry with a feeling which went beyond allegiance—the passionate attachment with which the Celt never fails to reward the masters who treat him with kindness and justice. But

men like these kept clear of public life, or if they entered it can be traced only by ineffectual efforts to stem the general tide. At best they were but a handful of salt, to keep the mess from putrefying, and were never in sufficient numbers to influence materially the fortunes of the country. A third, at one time half, of the Protestant owners of land in Ireland were absentees. Their connection with their properties was the mercantile one merely. Their duties were to send persons to collect their rents. Their lands were leased to head tenants, whom the law compelled to call themselves Protestants also; but these persons were often of the old blood, ashamed of the names they bore, and, being without religion of any kind, were without moral sense. The idea of duty having disappeared, the idea which took its place was the desirableness of being an idle gentleman. To live without labour, to spend his time in hunting, shooting, drinking, gambling, and fighting duels, became the supreme object of an Irishman's ambition. The head tenant let to others like himself, and they again to others, till the division fell at length below the line at which Catholics were excluded from holding farms. The Catholics would offer any rent, and thus gradually ousted such Protestant cultivators as had remained from earlier times. Over large tracts of the southern provinces the only Protestants were the agents of the gentry, or else tenants holding on lives and long leases. The cultivation fell exclusively to the Catholic peasantry, to wretched cottiers, themselves starving on potatoes, who in those above them saw nothing but a

series of profligate extortioners, a reproach alike to the creed they professed and to the system of administration which they represented.

The extremity of worthlessness was to be found on the estates of the absentees. Of the resident proprietors, the smaller sorts, living most of them beyond their means, and buried in mortgages, nearly resembled the middleman. The more considerable, with a few remarkable exceptions, formed the Irish gentlemen of popular tradition, who, easy and good-natured, had accommodated themselves, like the Norman barons, to the ways of their country. They, too, raced and rode and drank. They were out at elbows. They were popular among their tenants, and on the whole, kind to them. But it was the more necessary for them to find other means of replenishing their empty purses. In a land where industry was under a blight, they took up into themselves the genius of the nationality which their fathers had been planted in Ireland to eradicate. Light-hearted, reckless, and extravagant, they became like Irish chiefs of the sixteenth century in modern costume, living from hand to mouth, and recognizing but one obligation which was always and uniformly held sacred among them—to send or accept a challenge, with or without reason, at any place and at any time. These, for the most part, were the country magistrates, to whom the peace of Ireland was entrusted. The duties were light, for the crimes committed were of a sort which, till landlords began themselves to be murdered, opinion did not severely condemn; and those inclined to be more severe



found themselves compelled to conform to the general tone. As a rule, the difficulty of obtaining evidence was a sufficient passive check. If a too enterprising magistrate went further, if he insisted on punishing a ravisher, or preventing a duel, or arresting smugglers or whiskey distillers, or interfering in short with any general right which custom sanctioned, he was encountered by a challenge to himself from one or other of the parties aggrieved, and he had to fight, or lie under the ban of society.

More unsuited than even the owners of the land for the work demanded of them, were the spiritual instructors which the Irish Constitution provided. That the Irish Celts might be converted to Protestantism could not be called impossible after the example of Wales and the Scotch Highlands. That they should be so converted was of incomparably more consequence, because it was only when ceasing to be Catholics that it was possible for them to become loyal subjects of the British Crown. British Ministers dreamt of attaching them by standing between the priests and the execution of the penal laws. The priests affected gratitude, which they did not and could not feel. The Irishman, who was at once Celt and Catholic, inherited a legacy of bitterness from the past which he was forbidden to forget. The invaders were in possession of the land of his fathers. He had been stripped of his home for his fidelity to his creed. He saw himself trodden down into serfdom on the soil which had been his own, and England—England only—he knew to be the cause of

his sorrows. The edge of his animosity was blunted when he adopted the reformed religion. The rebellions which had occasioned the forfeiture were then no longer sacred to him, and his point of sympathy with the conquerors was stronger than his resentment. To gain him over therefore should have been the first object of an English statesman, and the institutions of the country should have been studiously adapted to missionary purposes. No organization could have been invented, less adapted for such an end, than the Established communion. It had divided Protestantism in two, and had ostracized the most energetic section of it. It drove the Presbyterians into republicanism and disaffection; and to the Catholic, who boasted of his own unchanging and uniform faith, it presented the contrast of wrangling creeds hating and denouncing each other more cordially than either hated their common antagonist.

The Irish Church, had it not been for English influence, would probably have drifted into a wiser policy and perhaps a more successful career. At the beginning of the last century the bishops and clergy were Jacobites and High Churchmen, and were disabled for active work of any kind by worldliness and pluralities. The pluralities and worldliness continued, but the happy possessors of the richer benefices became absentees like the landlords. The work was left to curates of simpler habits and more genuine piety. The visit of Wesley to Ireland and the practical conflict with Romanism of a violent type, had kindled and fostered in the parochial clergy an interesting development of evangelical devo-

tion; and had they been left to themselves to choose their own prelates and organize their own services, they would have found means perhaps of ending the schism which was paralyzing Protestant efficiency. Here too, however, as everywhere else, the Parliamentary system made improvement impossible. The high offices in the Church, the bishoprics and deaneries, were utilized as the most effective instruments of political influence, and were reserved and distributed with scarcely an exception as the reward or inducement of party service. The celebrated passage in which Swift describes the nominees to the Irish sees as waylaid and murdered by highwaymen on Hounslow Heath, who stole their letters patent, came to Dublin, and were consecrated in their place, is scarcely an exaggeration of the material out of which Ireland in the last century was provided with a spiritual hierarchy. When men like Stone were Primates, and men like Harvey suffragans, the prelates of the Irish Establishment were perhaps more singular specimens of successors of the Apostles than Christendom under its various phases had ever witnessed or will witness again.

The English Government might count itself innocent, and doubtless was content so to regard its own conduct. If Irish landlords chose to neglect their obligations and their properties, if the Parliament was corrupt and could be kept in working condition only by the prostitution of the secular and spiritual patronage; if all classes preferred their own customs to the ordinary principles of order and morality, they were themselves the cause of their own miseries. They had the same

institutions under which England was the envy of the world. If they misused their advantages, on them lay the responsibility. The excuse falls in but too completely with the modern theories of liberty. It is identical with the defence presented long ago by Adam's eldest son, and, as in that first instance, was a cynical pretext to cover deliberate wickedness. If Ireland had fallen into sloth, England had first annihilated the most flourishing branch of her industry. She had left her the linen trade, and boasted of having given her exceptional advantages in the prosecution of it, but she was repenting of her magnanimity, invading the compact, and by side measures, stealing it from her in favour of her own people. She had cut Ireland off from the sea by her Navigation Laws, and had forced her into a contraband trade which enlisted half her population in organized resistance to the law. Even her wretched agriculture had been discouraged, lest an increasing breadth of corn in Cork and Tipperary should lower the value of English land. Her salt meat and butter were laid under an embargo when England went to war, that the English fleets and armies might be victualled cheaply at the expense of Irish farmers. If the high persons at the head of the great British empire had deliberately considered by what means they could condemn Ireland to remain the scandal of their rule, they could have chosen no measures better suited to their end than those which they had pursued unrelentingly through three quarters of a century. By definite acts of unjust legislation they were forcing the

entire people to abandon themselves to the potato, and to sit down to brood over their wrongs in a paralysis of rage and despair.

Things had come to a point when if men had held their peace the very stones would have cried out. Legislatures may pass laws at their high pleasure, but if the laws are not in harmony with the order of nature, nature will refuse to recognize them. The discontent of the peasantry might have been kept down by force; the oratory of the patriots could have been bought over; but every sound and honourable mind in Ireland was now convinced of the necessity of a change. The Americans were pointing the way to redress, setting the example of resistance, and creating an opportunity. A great occasion raises common men to a level above their own. Accident, or the circumstances of the country, had created in Ireland at this time a knot of gentlemen whose abilities and whose character would anywhere have marked them for distinction. Indignation and hope had induced them to forego the temptations which under ordinary conditions would have carried them away to England. They remained at home to fight the battle of their country, to inflict on England a well-merited humiliation, and to try the experiment whether Ireland could or could not be safely trusted with the control of her own destinies.

## SECTION II.

THE fortunes of Ireland at this moment were connected so intimately with the phases of war in America, that the student of the Irish revolution must <sup>1776</sup> keep himself reminded of the parallel events of the Transatlantic struggle.

After the battle of Bunker's Hill the American lines were drawn closer round Boston. The opening of the year 1776 found General Washington established on Dorchester Heights, from which his cannon commanded the anchorage. Swarms of small privateers from the mouths of the New England rivers intercepted the provision ships coming in from the sea, and in March General Howe found it necessary to evacuate the city, and to remove his troops to some position where they could act with effect and be no longer straitened for supplies. Sir Peter Parker was foiled in the summer in an attack on Charleston; and encouraged by these signal successes, the representatives of the united colonies ventured their Declaration of Independence. Initial misfortunes hardened the spirit and roused the resolution of England. An attempt to enlist Canada in the revolt was a disastrous failure. Colonel Montgomery, who commanded the invading forces, was killed; his army which expected to be welcomed with enthusiasm was cut in pieces by the colonists and the British garrison at Quebec; and an American squadron

on Lake Champlain was taken or destroyed. Lord Howe came out with large reinforcements to the Bay of New York, where he was joined by his brother Sir William and by the troops withdrawn from Boston. Lord Howe had brought with him power to negotiate, and it is possible that if substantial concessions had been offered after the disappointment in Canada, the Declaration of Independence might have been reconsidered. The idea of separation was as yet unfamiliar, and the majority of the colonists were as loyal to the empire generally as they were tenacious of their liberties, and determined to assert them. Lord Howe, however, contented himself with offering pardon to those who would lay down their arms. General Washington held Long Island and the Island of New York itself with 17,000 men. The British Generals intended if possible to take New York and use it from thenceforward as the base of their operations. Sir William Howe landed on Long Island, a little to the North of Sandy Hook. He advanced along the harbour to Brooklyn, opposite the city, and on the 29th of August 29 August, on the ground where Brooklyn Park and Cemetery now stand, he encountered Washington, defeated him, drove him across into New York, and out of New York over the Hudson, and thence in the month following forced him back over the Delaware into the forest, apparently broken into ruin.

Now still more would have been the time for Lord Howe to produce his commission to treat. But  
1777 careless through the ease of their success the

English forgot Lexington and Bunker's Hill. They regarded their work as done. They broke into separate divisions. They were surprised in detail at Princeton and Trenton, and severely punished. Sir William Howe gathered his broken detachments together, retreated slowly through New Jersey to New York, manœuvring in vain to draw Washington into another general action, and the season being over, settled in his winter quarters to lay his plans for a decisive campaign in the coming spring. New England was the heart of the insurrection. As soon as the snow had gone and roads and rivers were again open, General Burgoyne was to move south from Canada by Lake Champlain, cross the watershed, and descend the Hudson to Albany, where Sir Henry Clinton would meet him ascending the same river from New York. The New England States would thus be cut off from their allies, and tamed perhaps into a separate peace. Meanwhile Howe himself, whom the fleet enabled to select his own point of landing, could threaten Pennsylvania, and if he failed to reduce it could at least prevent Washington from operating against Burgoyne. Sir William Howe conducted his own share of the campaign with perfect success; he landed at the mouth of the Chesapeake, inflicted a destructive defeat on the Americans on the Brandywine, broke them again as fast as they recombined, finally drove the Congress out of Philadelphia, destroyed the forts which had been raised by Washington to prevent the entrance of the English ships into the Delaware, and sate down in the autumn with his



fleet and army in full possession of the American capital.

Far different was the fate of Burgoyne, whose task, to all appearance, was the easier of the two.

Leaving Sir Guy Carleton in Canada with a force adequate for its defence, Burgoyne set out in the middle of June, with ten thousand of the best soldiers with which England could furnish him, a powerful train of field artillery, and a flying swarm of Indian allies, the warriors of the Six Nations who, useless for purposes of real fighting, it was hoped would terrify the American imagination, and instead of terror produced only resentment by their cruelties, and a censure on their employment from the conscience of civilized mankind. He advanced unresisted as far as the head of Lake Champlain. The Americans had a fort at Ticonderoga, but they at once evacuated it on his appearance, and still without seeing an enemy, Burgoyne struck into the forest to make his way to Fort Edward, on the Hudson. Here his difficulties began. Roads there were few or none. The settlers driven to fury by the savages took their rifles and hung upon his skirts, interrupting his communications and cutting off his foraging parties. They closed in between him and Lake Champlain, and stopped his supplies from the rear. The country was swept clean in his front. He found himself dependent entirely on the stores which he carried with him, and was obliged to push forward at the utmost speed. The utmost speed was very small. It was enough for the Americans if they could impede his march. Hunger

would then do their work for them. On the 30th of June Burgoyne had left Lake Champlain. In the middle of September he was still fifty miles from Albany, hemmed in, with provisions failing and unable to move. On the 19th he was attacked by the Americans, and fought a severe battle without being able to extricate himself. Clinton, whom he contrived to inform of his situation, came forward up the river; but instead of pushing on through Albany contented himself with destroying villages and farmhouses in the expectation that he would draw the Americans off. They understood their advantage too well to lose it. They could rebuild their houses. They might wait long before they could catch in a net another English army. As October opened, Burgoyne made one more desperate plunge, and struggled a few miles further to Saratoga. There another battle followed, when he lost several of his guns. The Indians deserted him. His provisions gave out. He attempted to retreat, but it was too late. Half his force was sick or dis-  
abled, and on the 12th of October, with no <sup>October</sup> 12  
alternative before him but destruction, he was compelled to lay down his arms.

The impression produced by this catastrophe was of greater consequence by far than the material loss. It raised the Americans to the rank of a belligerent power, to be admired and recognized by the world. It decided France to revenge herself for the loss of her Transatlantic provinces by assisting, since she could not keep them for herself, in tearing them from her rival.

Franklin, to whom England would not listen, repaired to Paris, where he was received with open arms. Then, at last, when the opportunity was gone, Lord North began to realize the magnitude of his task. Stunned by the surrender at Saratoga and finding his old enemy preparing to strike in, he recognized the necessity of a compromise, and a bill was hurried through Parliament, which six months previously the States would have accepted with gratitude. The pretension to tax the colonies directly or indirectly was totally and for ever abandoned, and Lord Carlisle and Mr. Eden were sent out as commissioners, with power to offer free trade, to offer seats in the English House of Commons, if America wished to be represented there, and to offer, in the name of England, to bear part of the debt which the colonists had incurred in maintaining their rights by arms. It was too late. Anticipating the course  
1778 which England would pursue, France, in consenting to an alliance with the States, had made it a condition that they would for ever renounce their connection with the mother country. La Fayette, who had joined the American army as a volunteer, when the news arrived that the treaty was signed, had flung himself in tears into Washington's arms. Before Lord Carlisle landed the chances of reunion were gone unless it could be achieved by force of arms. Congress replied to the English emissary that if Great Britain desired to negotiate with America, she must withdraw her fleets and armies and recognize American Independence. Very gallantly England accepted the new conditions of

the conflict. She declared war against France. Spain, in the hope of recovering Gibraltar and Jamaica, flung herself into the quarrel and made a third enemy. The little island, stripping herself in earnest now for the large task which lay before her, prepared to encounter single-handed the two strongest powers in Europe, and still keep her hold on her revolted provinces. It was work for a giant, and never before in her history did England bear herself with finer spirit. A French squadron, under Count d'Estaing, appeared at the mouth of the Delaware. Howe moved<sup>1</sup> from Philadelphia and fell back to New York. But the English fleet, thus reinforced from home, came out and drove d'Estaing into Boston, where he was left imprisoned. At the outset the French brought no help to their allies, but only misfortune. Together they attempted Rhode Island, but made nothing of it. A British force was landed in Georgia, defeated the American army there, and recovered the State. The summer following, 1779, an expeditionary force from New <sup>1779</sup> York laid waste Virginia. Re-embarking and going north it attacked Connecticut, taking and plundering New Haven and Fairfield. An American fleet was destroyed in August off Massachusetts. Savannah was taken in the south, and a desperate attempt to recover it decisively failed.

It seemed as if England, hitherto, had been playing with her work, and was only now setting to it in earnest. The next year, 1780, brought the <sup>1780</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> July, 1778.

Americans no better fortune. Sir Henry Clinton made a second attack on Charleston and this time successfully. Charleston surrendered, and five thousand of the soldiers of independence whom Washington could ill spare became prisoners of war. General Gates hastened with the heroes of Saratoga to the defence of Carolina. Lord Cornwallis met him at Camden, and the sharpest battle hitherto fought in the war, ended in a route of the Americans. Gates lost his stores and his guns. Cornwallis, master of the field, was master of the Southern States, and proceeded to confiscate estates, try and punish leading insurgents, and inflict on the Carolinas the sharpest consequences of unsuccessful rebellion. So far as appearances could promise, England was only threatened by another European coalition that she might play over again as proud a part as she had played under Chatham.

Bearing with him this general outline of the events of the American War, the reader will now be prepared to understand what was happening to Ireland.

## SECTION III.

COULD Lord North have foreseen the problem which was about to be presented to him, he would have chosen the ablest statesman to succeed Lord Harcourt whom he could have persuaded into undertaking a post so detested as the Viceroyalty of Ireland. Encouraged, perhaps, by the apparent docility of the newly-elected Parliament he fixed on the Earl of Buckinghamshire, a nobleman whose qualifications were that he had discharged without discredit the office of minister at St. Petersburg. Lord Buckinghamshire on entering on his office was encountered at once by a phenomenon at once novel and disagreeable. The embargo had given a fresh impulse to the smuggling trade. Armed sloops and brigantines were again fitted out in the creeks of Cork and Kerry, which at sea and in unquiet times were not particularly scrupulous, while by the side of them and in intimate correspondence with them there appeared on the coast three fast-sailing and heavily-armed privateers carrying American colours, come over to spend the summer in and about St. George's Channel, the 'Lexington' and the 'Reprisal,' eighteen-gun sloops, and the 'Dolphin,' a ten-gun brig. Their crews were mixed, Americans, French, with a large admixture of Irish. They lay chiefly between Holyhead and the Irish Coast, in the track of the

Liverpool and Belfast traders. Their prizes as fast as they took them they sent away round the Land's End, to some French port, where they were sold. The prize crews it was easy to recruit from the smugglers and fishermen. Three ships of the line were sent from Portsmouth to destroy or drive off these mischievous hornets. The 'Arethusa,' a thirty-two-gun frigate, was ordered to find and capture them. They laughed at the liners. They evaded the 'Arethusa.' A fourth brigantine, the 'Oliver Cromwell,' was added to their number in the course of the summer, and they plied their trade with impunity, the smugglers keeping them furnished with fresh provisions, with pilots, and with information. The naval supremacy of England, in reliance on which the Irish harbours were left undefended and Ireland was left bare of troops, was defied at her own doors, while the American flag was seen daily fluttering in insolence from the Irish coast anywhere between Londonderry and Cork.<sup>1</sup>

The Biennial Session came duly round in the autumn. The speech was colourless; the address was unopposed. The political air was tranquil, for all parties were standing at gaze waiting for news from America. It was known that Howe had driven the Congress from Philadelphia. Had it fared equally well with Burgoyne, the majority so carefully secured by Harcourt would have remained true to the winning colours. But in December came the account that Burgoyne was

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<sup>1</sup> See the Irish State Papers, for the spring and summer of 1777.

taken, and then that Franklin was in Paris and that a treaty was signed between the insurgent States and France. The next thing that Ireland heard was that Lord Carlisle was going over to grant America more than Ireland had ever asked or dreamt of. This was to be the reward of rebellion. America had taken arms. Ireland had sat passive under her wrongs. America was to be free and triumphant; Ireland was to wear her chains as the symbol of her loyalty.

It was more than Irish blood could bear. Grattan, taking at once his natural place, be-<sup>1778</sup> came the voice of his people. On the 7th of February he moved an address to the Crown that the condition of Ireland was no longer endurable. The military establishment was more costly than ever, yet the country was undefended. The Civil List had grown like a rank weed. Sinecures were heaped on sinecures. The Pension List was so heavy in 1757 that the Commons had protested against it; since that time it had doubled. The representatives of the people must speak out. Mr. Grattan did not prescribe the particular mode of redress, but he demanded a change of system and appealed to the King.

The motion was lost by a heavy majority,<sup>1</sup> but the debate was long and fierce. The supporters of the Government expressed their hope to the Viceroy after the division that the privileges which were to be granted to the rebellious Americans would be extended to a country which had borne its wrongs without resistance,

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<sup>1</sup> 143 to 66.



and that the restrictions on Irish trade would be relaxed or abolished.<sup>1</sup>

The Catholics had been demonstratively loyal at the outbreak of the rebellion. They had been rewarded with gracious words, and they too had come to think that they might receive something more substantial. In March, Mr. Talbot, on behalf of the Catholic Committee, presented the Viceroy with a list of grievances, the redress of which, if it satisfied the Committee's expectation, would amount 'to a repeal of almost the whole of the Penal Laws.'<sup>2</sup>

Concession was the order of the day. The King had already resolved on doing something for the Catholics, and the rising tone in the Protestant House of Commons made the Government more anxious to strengthen themselves with the support of their rivals. Lord Buckinghamshire was directed to feel his way among the members of both Houses best inclined to the Catholics, and discover what degree of relief could be proposed with a chance of success. He met with a cold reception. 'The unanimous opinion' was that although a relaxation of the Penal Laws was desirable, 'the time was unfavourable,' and that to bring it forward at present 'would set the country in a flame.'<sup>3</sup>

The Catholic Committee was satisfied to wait, but Mr. Talbot left a sketch of their views with the Vice-

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, February 7. To Lord North, March 20, 1778.'

<sup>2</sup> 'To Lord Weymouth, March 4.'

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

roy. The preamble of it contained as an objection to the continuance of the Penal Laws the singular remark 'that those laws had rather tended to <sup>1778</sup> create an aversion from and dislike to the Established Church, and thereby in a great measure prevented a great majority of the people from embracing the Protestant religion.' It paid a compliment equally noticeable to Protestantism itself, by appealing 'to the doctrine and principles of the Reformation, and to the spirit of British laws against oppression or persecution on account of religious belief.' The substance of the Catholic demands was, 'that no person who had taken the oath of allegiance in its latest form should be counted a Papist according to the meaning of the Popery Acts.'<sup>1</sup>

'Divide et impera' was still Lord North's maxim. He hoped by humouring the Catholics to escape a struggle on the trade monopolies. But the art of governing by these time-honoured methods was ceasing to answer its end. War had been declared against France, and the privateers of the past summer might now be supplemented by a fleet from Brest. The coast towns could no longer be left without garrisons.

Parliament voted 300,000*l.* for the repairs of the fortresses. The country professed its willingness to provide for its own defence either by volunteer corps or by a militia. The Presbyterians especially, who had been hitherto devotedly American, were forward in offering their services.<sup>2</sup> The idea of volunteers had not

<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, March 4, 1778.'

<sup>2</sup> 'The idea of the French war has not only altered the language

yet, perhaps, suggested itself with any sinister object. It was mentioned only as an alternative. The Militia Bill of the last session which had been rejected in England in the interest of the Catholics was again sent over, and the Viceroy begged that it might this time be returned to him, that if necessary the militia might be embodied. The Parliament, however, he said, preferred volunteer corps, and for himself he was strongly of the same opinion. The cost of the militia would fall on the Treasury. If the lords and gentlemen of Ireland were willing to raise independent companies at their expense, it would be a pity to reject their liberality. The Treasury was empty. Twenty thousand pounds had been borrowed at interest from La Touche's bank, but that was already spent. There were pressing demands for money for indispensable purposes, and a second application to Messrs. La Touche had been met by polite excuses.<sup>1</sup>

The necessity of prompt resolution was made more apparent by news which came in from the north. In the last year the privateers had not appeared before June. They had vanished at the equinox, and if they returned they were not looked for at an earlier part of the season. The 'Arethusa' and her consort had gone back to Portsmouth. The 'Drake,' a 20-gun brig or brigantine, lay at Carrickfergus, and is the only vessel mentioned as on the station. A seaman, meanwhile,

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but the disposition of the Presbyterians.—The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, March 29.'

<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord North, April 30, 1778.'

had entered the service of Congress who knew how to use an opportunity.

Paul Jones was born at Kirkcudbright, in the year 1747, and was the son of a servant of Mr. Craik, of Arbigland. He was apprenticed when twelve years old to a merchant at Whitehaven, and after remaining with him fourteen years emigrated to Virginia. There he found himself at the breaking out of the revolutionary war, and taking the American side he distinguished himself so brilliantly in command of a privateer, that in the spring of 1778 he was appointed to the 'Ranger,' a fast 18-gun sloop, with a roving commission. Guessing that if he was early in the Irish waters he would find the coast clear, he sailed for St. George's Channel at the beginning of April. Every harbour was familiar to him, and the condition of every harbour battery. At midnight on the 20th of April an unknown armed vessel sailed into Carrickfergus Harbour, and brought up under the 'Drake's' side. She had meant to board, but she swung astern too far in the tide. The 'Drake' hailed her to know what she was and whence she came. A voice answered hastily that she was from St. Vincent's. A moment after she had cut her cable and was standing again out to sea. The 'Drake' fired a shot and stood out in pursuit, but she had lost time in getting under weigh, and the mysterious stranger had disappeared in the darkness. It was the 'Ranger,' which had crossed the Atlantic in less than twenty days, and had already in the way up Channel taken a Waterford brig, a Dublin ship called the 'Lord Chatham,' and a sloop and

schooner which she had pillaged and sunk. Having missed the 'Drake,' Jones stood across to Whitehaven to visit his old acquaintances there. His appearance was an absolute surprise. Before the inhabitants had recovered from their astonishment he had landed a couple of boats' crews, spiked the guns in the batteries, fired the shipping in the harbour, and was gone like a sky-rocket.

Swiftmess in such matters was the condition of success. On the morning of the 22nd Paul Jones was in Kirkcudbright Bay, the scene of his childhood; he landed at St. Mary's Isle and plundered the house of Lord Selkirk. Thence on the instant he flew back to the Irish coast to look for his friend the 'Drake,' and dispose of her while she was still alone. The 'Drake' was at her old moorings in the Lough. Jones entered again this time in broad daylight at eight in the morning, sailed round her, and went out again. An English officer could not refuse so insolent a challenge. The 'Drake's' guns were four-pounders, the 'Ranger's' were sixes. Captain Burder, the 'Drake's' commander, nevertheless instantly weighed and went in pursuit. The 'Ranger' led him a long chase. He did not overtake her till the evening. After an hour's sharp engagement, yard-arm to yard-arm, Captain Burder and his first officer were killed, half the crew were dead or disabled, and the 'Drake' herself with shattered spars and leaking sides was obliged to strike. Another ship from Whitehaven captured the next morning completed the work of a single week, and the bold privateer, after

landing his least valuable prisoners on the Antrim coast, made sail for Brest with his prizes.<sup>1</sup>

The dullest pedant in the English Government could no longer resist such a rude awakening. Already the English Parliament had begun to think that Ireland must be attended to. A bill was brought in and carried for repeal of the Penal Laws against the Catholics at home of which the Irish Acts had been a copy. It was an example which Ireland might follow if it pleased. Lord Nugent had brought up the trade question, and after a hard fight had wrung out some few concessions. The embargo was taken off, and Ireland, as an extraordinary favour, was allowed a free export of all her productions *except* woollens.

The absenteeism of her men of genius was a worse wrong to Ireland than the absenteeism of her landlords. If Edmund Burke had remained in the country where Providence had placed him, he might have changed the current of its history. When he took up her cause at last in earnest it was with a brain which the French revolution had deranged, and his interference became infinitely mischievous. In these preliminary questions, however, he exerted himself wisely and on the right side. The table of the House of Commons was covered with petitions from the English manufacturers against further indulgence. Ministers talked the usual cant that taxes in Ireland were low and living cheap, and that she must be weighted in the race or England would

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<sup>1</sup> 'Depositions taken before the Rev. R. Dobbs, co. Antrim, April 27, 1778.' S. P. O.

be ruined. Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, were almost in insurrection. Burke had the courage to face the storm. He demanded for one thing the re-extension to Ireland of the benefit of the Navigation Laws, and though he failed for the time and quarrelled to no effective purpose with his Bristol constituents, he forced English statesmen into a faint perception of the enormity of their past policy, and familiarized them with the necessity of a change.

Not venturing to risk the stability of the Cabinet in a commercial tempest, yet aware that something must be done to bring Ireland into a better mind, Lord North fell again upon the Catholic question. He had reason to fear in fact that the Catholics were less loyal than they pretended, and that unless he insisted on concessions being made to them, he might have an Irish insurrection on his hands in addition to his other troubles.<sup>1</sup> Ireland must do what England had done.

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<sup>1</sup> 'I have acquired a piece of information here, concerning a plot for a revolt in the west of Ireland among the Roman Catholics, with a view to overturn the present Government, by the aid of the French and Spaniards, and to establish such an one as prevails in this country, I mean the Cantons, by granting toleration to the Protestants. You may depend on its authenticity, and that at this moment many friars are going secretly from France to Ireland to set it going; though the late Acts passed for the relief of the Roman Catholics will, it is to

be hoped, prevent it from succeeding; the motive to revolt having proceeded from the intolerable hardships they suffered. My intelligence comes from Rome, and I am pretty certain these Acts have been brought in, from the ministry receiving the same intelligence, which I know they have been in possession of for some time; as the measures for preventing the mischief proposed by the person who gives the information are exactly those that have been adopted. Depend on its being true, and that all the Roman Catholics in the west of Ireland

The Viceroy was directed to urge the friends of Government to swallow their scruples, and forward immediately some measure 'of expedient relief.' Something was better than nothing. Many intelligent Irishmen were aware that the Penal Laws had failed of their purpose and could no longer be retained. Others, not inclined to relaxation on the side of the Catholics, remembered that the Presbyterian disabilities had been laid on in a side clause of the anti-Popery Act. The relief of the Catholics might be accompanied appropriately with the relief of the Nonconformists. The Bill was entrusted to Luke Gardiner, the member for Dublin, who afterwards, as Lord Mountjoy, was to learn the real meaning of Catholic emancipation when he was piked and hacked to death at New Ross. At present he was known only as a rising politician, one of the very small body in the House of Commons whose principles were above suspicion. His proposal was to repeal the gavelling clauses of the Act of Anne, to allow the property of Catholics to descend unbroken, to take from the eldest son the power of making his father tenant for life by affecting conversion, to enable Catholics to purchase freehold property, and to relieve them from the vexatious limitations on their leases, which had led so many of the larger tenants to affect to be Protestants. These suggestions fell far short of the

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have been ripe for a revolt some time; and that the plan was, and may be yet, a fixed purpose, that has been in agitation, and preparing to burst ever since France showed

a disposition to break with England. — Lord Amherst to Lord North, from Geneva, June 17, 1778.' S. P. O.



committee's expectations, but short as they were they involved the final surrender of the policy which was designed to throw the whole soil of Ireland into Protestant hands. To part entirely with so cherished an expectation was more than the House was prepared for. An amendment to withhold from Catholics the right of buying freeholds, and to enable them instead to take leases for 999 years, was carried, after a long debate, by a majority of three.<sup>1</sup> A member in favour of the Presbyterians then moved the repeal of the Test clause. There had been a time when English Ministers were alive to the enormous impolicy of alienating so powerful a section of the Protestant community, and had endeavoured in vain to persuade the Irish Parliament to adopt a wiser attitude towards Dissent. Now, when the Irish Commons at least were willing, it was England that drew back. Lord North and the Viceroy, sharing the miserable prejudices of Churchmen against Dissenters, had determined that the Dissenters' disabilities should be maintained as a punishment of the Presbyterians for their American tendencies; but their hope was to avoid if possible the responsibility of the rejection, and throw the odium of it on the Irish Parliament. Very many members of the House of Commons, by the Viceroy's confession, were in its favour. Lord Buckinghamshire might have succeeded, however, in throwing out the clause by Castle influence, but for the tactics of some of the leaders of the ultra-Protestant party. Lord Shannon, Lord Ely, and other noblemen

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<sup>1</sup> 111 to 108.

who were opposed to granting relief to the Catholics supported the relief of the Dissenters 'as a clog to the rest of the Bill.' They were aware of Lord North's resolution. They expected that if the Presbyterian claims formed part of the Bill as it was sent to England, one of two things would happen—either it would be struck out by the English Cabinet, and the party in the House which had supported Catholic relief only with a view of emancipating the Presbyterians would then reject it altogether, or the Bill would be returned entire, and then it would be thrown out by the bishops in the House of Lords.<sup>1</sup> Assisted by the nominees of these great persons, the clause was carried through the House of Commons. So intense, so childish, was still the animosity of the peers and prelates against the Non-conformists that it passed the Council on its way to England, only from an assurance that it would be removed there. Lord North, as was anticipated, struck it out. The sacramental test, which had done more harm in Ireland than all the penal acts against the Papists ten times told, was persistently retained. The Bill came back a relief to Papists only, and in this form nearly met the fate which Lord Shannon and its friends designed for it. It was carried through the Commons with extreme difficulty, but it was carried, and the first step was taken in the series of measures yet perhaps unended, which are called Justice to Ireland. The Catholic Irish could once more acquire a hold on the soil of their fathers. The distinction between a tenure

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, June 20, 1778.'

of 999 years or a lease for five lives and a freehold was too arbitrary to be permanent. This feature in the Penal Laws, the harshest because the most difficult to evade, was abolished for ever, and with it the ever demoralizing, if not at the time when it was enacted wholly unnecessary, power bestowed on a child who conformed to the Establishment to prevent his father from disinheriting him.

With the Catholic Relief Bill was this time returned also the Militia Bill, as the Viceroy had desired; and 50,000*l.* borrowed from the Bank of England were sent over for greater security in a frigate to enable the Viceroy to protect the harbours.<sup>1</sup> As the summer wore on, privateers under French and American colours thickened in the Irish Channel, the fishermen and smugglers being still their constant friends. Two of them lay usually off Bray Head, others off Waterford and Cork, others at the Durseys or Cape Clear. Being built for speed they laughed at pursuit, and made prizes of any traders that passed them. Their occupation was so lively and so lucrative that it found imitators in the captains and owners of the contraband crafts, who

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Weymouth, June 3, 1778.—It is painful to observe that at a time when Lord North appeared really alarmed about Ireland Irish jobs were as rife as ever. Charles James Fox held a sinecure office of Clerk of the Pells in Ireland, with a salary of 2300*l.* a year. In this year, 1778, North induced Fox to surrender it in return for 30,000*l.* in hand and a life pension of 1700*l.* a year. The Clerkship of the Pells was then given to Mr. Jenkinson, afterwards Earl of Liverpool. The salary was raised from 2300*l.* to 3500*l.*, and the Irish Exchequer was thus burdened in this one transaction with an additional 1200*l.* on the office which Fox had held, the pension of 1700*l.* a year and the interest of 30,000*l.*'

went to Brest for letters of marque and returned to their haunts to plunder, as if engaged in honourable war. The Viceroy's 50,000*l.* meanwhile melted away, yet no coast guard was established and no militia. From piracy at sea the step would be a short one to pillage on shore, and the country gentlemen began in earnest to arm their tenants and combine in corps for mutual protection. The state of the Channel was creating serious inconvenience in England, and English attention already roused on the Irish problem began to direct itself upon it in earnest. Lord Nugent again brought up the subject in Parliament. He was an absentee; and it did not occur to him that his own duty was to return to his post. His patriotic perceptions had been quickened by the cessation of remittances. For two years he told the House of Commons that he had received no rents. The war had ruined the linen trade. The embargo had ruined the farmers. Artisan and peasant were starving. Land was offered at fourteen years' purchase and found no buyers. By every ground of obligation, by duty, by prudence, by common human feeling for the misery of their fellow-subjects, the English legislature was bound to interfere, and to remove at least the artificial hindrances which were shackling Irish enterprise. The Northern English millowners clamoured that the Irish were idle, and were starving by their own indolence. These interested coteries began to be listened to with less patience as the progress of the rebellion in America created an evidence so palpable of the possible consequences of misgovernment. The

King recommended that, in consequence of the undoubted distress in Ireland, the English Treasury should undertake the cost of the Irish regiments which were serving in America. The message brought on debates in which both Houses agreed to demand an account of the entire condition of Irish trade. Lord Shelburne ventured to say that America had revolted on far less provocation than had been habitually endured by Ireland. Lord Townshend, who knew Ireland, and knew what ailed her better than any of his hearers, spoke with remarkable feeling and eloquence, and implored the Peers to wake to a sense of the insolent cruelty with which the poor island had been so long afflicted. With keen antithesis he, too, like Shelburne, contrasted Ireland and America; the Irish patient under misery, which might have driven a wiser people into madness, the Americans rebellious in the midst of plenty and prosperity. Ireland, he said, perishing in the fetters which chained her industry, had petitioned humbly for partial release, and England had answered insolently, Break your chains if you can. The Americans had leagued themselves with England's inveterate enemy for her total destruction. To them England had said, You shall be free, you shall pay no taxes, we will interfere no more with you; remain with us on your own terms. If these replies were persisted in, the Irish when peace was made would emigrate to a land where honest labour would receive its due reward. While the war continued they would require to be held down by force, and at any moment they might refuse after

all either to buy English manufactures or export their own produce, and fleets and armies would preach to them in vain.

The Irish counties supported by petition the arguments of their English friends. The grand juries represented that the fields and highways were filled with crowds of wretched beings half naked and starving. Foreign markets were closed to them. The home market was destroyed by internal distress, and the poor artisans who had supported themselves by weaving were without work and without food. They had bought English goods as long as they had <sup>1779</sup> means to buy them. Now in their time of dire distress they had hoped the English Parliament would have been their friend. They learnt with pain and surprise that the only boon which would give them relief was still withheld. They besought the King to interpose in their favour, and procure them leave to export and sell at least the coarse frieze blankets and flannels which the peasants' wives and children produced in their cabins.<sup>1</sup> Eloquence and entreaty were alike in vain. The English Parliament, though compelled at last to listen to the truth, could not yet bend itself to act upon it. The House of Commons still refused to open the woollen trade, in whole or in part; and Ireland, now desperate and determined, and treading ominously in the steps of America, adopted the measures which Townshend had suggested, which long before had been

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<sup>1</sup> 'Humble petition of the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of Wicklow, April 6, 1779.' S. P. O.

recommended by Swift; and resolved to exclude from the Irish market every article of British manufacture which could be produced at home.<sup>1</sup>

The Viceroy, incapable of thought, and with a mind saturated with vulgar English prejudice, could see nothing in this movement but the secret action of French and American emissaries, and was rash enough to dream of prosecution. The law officers, wiser than he, forbade a folly which might have caused immediate insurrection. Weymouth allowed the dangers of the merchants' resolution, but advised Buckinghamshire to be quiet and conciliatory. He bade him tell the popular leaders that his majesty was deeply concerned

<sup>1</sup> 'Resolution taken at the Tholsel, in Dublin, April 26, 1779:—"That at this time of universal calamity and distress, when, through a total stagnation of our trade, poverty and wretchedness are now become the portion of those to whom hitherto labour and industry afforded a competency; when the emigration of thousands of our most useful manufacturers renders them acceptable and material acquisitions to other countries, and threatens ruin to our own; when, notwithstanding the most pathetic representations of our addresses, and our late humble petition to the throne, our sister country not only partially and unjustly still prevents us from benefiting by those advantages which the bountiful hand of Providence has bestowed on us, but even tantalizes us with imaginary schemes of im-

provement, and insults us with permission to cultivate our own soil; when the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic opposition of many self-interested people of Great Britain to the proposed encouragement of the trade and commerce of this kingdom originates in avarice and ingratitude. . . We will not directly or indirectly import or use any wares, the produce or manufacture of Great Britain, which can be produced or manufactured in this kingdom, until an enlightened policy, founded on principles of justice, shall appear to actuate the inhabitants of certain manufacturing towns there, who have taken an active part in opposing the regulations proposed in favour of the trade of Ireland."—Enclosed by the Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth.' S. P. O.

for his Irish subjects, and was occupied in devising means to relieve their distress.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile he desired the Viceroy to send him his own thoughts on the cause of the distress, and to collect the private sentiments of such of the servants of the Crown and other gentlemen as he could best depend on.

The Viceroy complied. He collected the opinions of Lord Lifford (the Chancellor), of Mr. Flood, of Sir Lucius O'Brien, Lord Annaly, Mr. Pery (the Speaker), of Hussey Burgh, and last and most important, of Hely Hutchinson; and the papers drawn by these gentlemen, for the most part calm and well-reasoned, form the best exposition which exists of the poisonous forces which had so long been working in the country.

For himself Lord Buckinghamshire admitted that his own view could be but superficial. In his opinion 'the great leading mischief' had been the rise of rents. The absentees were most to blame, but the resident gentry were in fault almost as much. They lived beyond their incomes. They had heavily encumbered their estates. Between absentee rents, the interest on mortgages, the interest on the now fast accumulating State debt, the profits of pensions and of the many lucrative offices held as sinecures by Englishmen, the aggregate sum sent annually out of the kingdom was out of all proportion to its resources. The soil could not be cultivated, the mines and fisheries could not be developed without capital, and the drain prevented

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Weymouth to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, May 7, 1779.'



capital from accumulating. Here, so far as the Viceroy could see, was the chief seat of the disease; of the manufacturing grievances others were fitter judges than himself.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Flood was hesitating and diffident, as became a patriot in bondage, who was unable to speak his real convictions. Sir Lucius O'Brien demanded free trade, pure and simple. Lord Annaly,<sup>2</sup> an old-experienced lawyer, selected three special influences as working for evil in Ireland—the trade laws, absenteeism, and lastly, 'the idleness and licentiousness of the lower class of people, which had been greatly increased by the Octennial Bill'—a remark as pregnant as it was unexpected. The patent remedy for Irish evils then and since has been the extension of what is popularly called liberty and self-government. The Octennial Bill was the first move in that direction, and had begun already to bear its too familiar fruits.

Lord Lifford was an Englishman, and was, perhaps, over partial to his own country. Like the Viceroy, he dwelt on the exhaustion caused by the remittances out of the country, the burden on the exchequer from so many useless nominal offices, the high rents, the enormous and unjust county cesses, which pressed so heavily on the peasantry, and the suspension of the linen trade, caused by the American war; the loss, 'too, of *the great clandestine woollen trade* which had been opened

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<sup>1</sup> 'Buckinghamshire to Weymouth, May 28, 1779.'

<sup>2</sup> John Gore, created Baron Annaly in 1776, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench.

with America,' and had been the chief support of the spinners and weavers. The existence of such a clandestine trade, however, required to be accounted for, and Lifford, feeling himself on dangerous ground, concluded cautiously: 'The great cause, or some great cause, lies probably much deeper. The seeds of the decay which have brought us to our present state may have been sown long ago. I fear there may be some radical cause, not sufficiently understood.' 'For remedy of present evils, nothing adequate can be found till the people of both kingdoms shall be brought to that temper and liberality of mind that they can think on so great a subject as citizens of the world, and feel indifferent, as one people, under one king, one constitution, and with one religion,<sup>1</sup> whether the manufactures of the empire are carried on in Down or in York.'

Pery wrote as a cultivated and moderate Irishman. His country, he said was either by direct prohibition, or as a consequence of other restraining laws, cut off from trade, either with the British colonies or with the rest of the world. There could be no commerce without assortments of the various goods which were in demand in the country traded with, and without free permission to bring back the produce of that country. Ireland's present produce was limited to linen and

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<sup>1</sup> This remarkable expression | deserves to be attended to. Intel- | this, to restore Ireland to the con-  
 lect, education, property, political | dition in which it stood before the  
 power, everything that could make | Cromwellian conquest, has been the  
 itself felt as a constituent of national | sole result, almost wholly accom-  
 life, was still Protestant. To undo | plished now, by England's peni-  
 tence for past misgovernment.

provisions. In the linen trade she had powerful rivals, and she was forbidden at present to send the most profitable branch of that manufacture to America, where there was the readiest market for it. Her provision trade had been violently destroyed by the recent embargo. Pery did not question the justice of the restraining laws, but he ventured to doubt the policy of them. It could not be England's interest to keep Ireland miserable. England was the centre of the empire. To England the wealth gained in the extremities must necessarily flow. She should be ashamed to confess that she dreaded Ireland's rivalry. Her policy should be to allow the Irish to exert themselves in whatever branch of industry best suited them, in common with their British fellow-subjects, and leave them to gather the harvest of their labours. This was all that they asked, and they ought not to be contented with less. Expedients might be tried, and probably would be tried, but they would fail of their object, and would only prolong the irritation. Let the restrictive laws be removed; the Irish and English nations would then be united in affection as much as in interest, and the power of malice would be unable to destroy their harmony; but the seeds of discord had been sown, and if allowed to spring up would soon overspread the land.

All parties were represented on the Viceroy's list. Hussey Burgh was more advanced than Pery, though, perhaps, no truer a patriot. He was young, but just turned thirty, handsome, and with a large fortune. His expenses still exceeded his income. He drove six

horses in the Phoenix Park, and he was attended everywhere by three outriders. He was indolent, but he had shown abilities in Parliament so considerable, that the Government had made him Prime Sergeant, rather to protect themselves against his hostility than in the hope of securing his support. He was called the Cicero of the Senate, and at happy moments he exceeded even Grattan in pregnant powers of expression.

‘It has come to this,’ Hussey Burgh replied to the Viceroy’s request for his sentiments on the Irish difficulty. ‘England must either support this kingdom, or allow her to support herself. Her option is to give in trade or to give in money; without one or the other the expenses cannot be supplied. If she gives in money, she suffers a country of great extent and fertility to become a burden instead of a benefit. If she gives in trade, whatever wealth we may acquire will flow back upon herself. Were I asked what is for the benefit of Manchester, what is for the benefit of Glasgow, I should answer that monopolies, however destructive of the general weal, are beneficial to those who possess them. Were I asked what is the most effectual measure for promoting the common wealth and strength of his majesty’s subjects of both kingdoms, I answer, an equal and perfect freedom of trade, without which one of those kingdoms has neither strength, wealth, nor commerce, and must become a burden on the other.’

The contribution of Mr. Hely Hutchinson was the first sketch of a book which he afterwards published on Ireland’s commercial disabilities, and which earned his

pardon from Irish patriotism for his subserviency to the Court and Lord Townshend.

‘You ask my sentiments on the state of my country,’ he answered to the Viceroy’s invitation. ‘I see ruin everywhere; the rate of interest rising, the revenue falling, between twenty and thirty thousand merchants and artisans in Dublin alone reduced to penury and supported by alms. The public debt exceeds a million, and the interest is remitted to England. Rents have risen, salaries have increased. Pensions, annuities, the American rebellion, the embargo, all in their several ways, have contributed to our distress. But the great and permanent cause of our misfortunes is the restraint of our commerce and the discouragement of our manufactures. The chief produce of our soil is wool, which we are forbidden to work; our weavers starve, therefore, for want of employment. Our principal material is a drug, and we import our woollen goods from England at a cost of 360,000*l.* a year. Your people are jealous of us. You say labour is cheaper here and taxes lower, and if you leave our trade free, we shall undersell you in foreign markets. Why is our labour cheaper? Our people live on potatoes and milk, or, more often, water. Why? Because they can afford no better. Were trade free they would earn higher wages and demand better fare. Underpaid labour is dear labour in the end. You do your work cheaper in England than we can do, for you undersell us with your woollens in our own market. Open our trade, and the prices of all things will then rise, labour included. Our wool will be

manufactured at home with the help of English capital. The chief profit will pass to you, but our people will prosper too. They will learn industry and grow in numbers, and be of service to the State.

‘Your exclusion of us from the woollen trade has hurt you even more than it has hurt us. One pack of Irish wool works up two packs of French wool. The French supply themselves with smuggled wool from Ireland ; they are thus able to undersell you everywhere, and your loss is then double what it would be if we exported our wool manufactured by ourselves. You have forced us into an illicit commerce, and our very existence now depends upon it. Ireland has paid to Great Britain for eleven years past double the sum that she collects from the whole world in all the trade which Great Britain allows her, a fact not to be paralleled in the history of the world. Whence did the money come ? But one answer is possible. It came from the contraband trade, and surely it is madness to suffer an important part of the empire to continue in such a condition. You defeat your own objects. You wished to secure a monopoly in foreign markets. You have not secured it. You wished to be the only purchasers of Irish wool, and the only sellers of woollen goods to Ireland. The quantity of wool exported from Ireland to England in the last ten years has been almost nothing, and we are driven to consume our native goods ourselves. As you have ordered it we can sell our wool and woollen goods only to you. We can buy woollen goods from you only. You impose a duty equal to a prohibition

on our sale of woollen goods to you ; you therefore in fact say to us that we shall not sell to you, and that we shall buy from you only. If such a law related to two private men instead of two kingdoms, and enjoined that in buying or selling the same goods, one individual should deal with one man only in exclusion of others, it would in effect ordain that both as buyer and seller that man should fix his own price and profit, and would refer to his discretion the loss and profit of the other dealer. You prohibited us from exporting live cattle into England, at the time of the prohibition a grievous calamity to us. You thus forced us into breeding sheep, and by the restraint of our woollen manufactures drove us next into the practice of running wool. In vain you endeavoured to prevent it by penalties and seizures. The world has become a great commercial society, and if you exclude trade from one channel it will make another for itself.

‘Your jealousies are of recent date ; not till the end of the seventeenth century was there ever an endeavour to interfere with Irish manufactures. Edward the Third, Edward the Fourth, Henry the Seventh specially favoured Ireland. Neither of the Cecils discouraged us. Charles the First, the Protector, and Charles the Second desired especially to develop the woollen trade among us. Restrictive laws never answer. You maintain a corn law, and a corn law is only mischievous. The farmer pays dearly in all that he buys for the advanced prices which manufacturers pay for corn. Enlarge your policy, our people will then

increase and will grow more prosperous. Merchants, sailors, farmers, manufacturers will spring up in the place of spiritless, starving drones who are a burden and a reproach to the empire in which they live.

‘Try the experiment at all events. It is to be hoped that the enlightened spirit which led to this enquiry will direct its progress, and that the representations of interested individuals will not decide your resolutions. Commercial bodies are like other corporations in desiring to be monopolists. The interest of the dealer in any branch of trade or manufacture is always different from or opposite to that of the public. To widen the market and narrow the competition is the interest of the dealer. To widen the market may frequently be the interest of the public, but to narrow the competition must always be against it.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Opinions of Lord Lifford, Sir Pery, and Mr. Hely Hutchinson, Lucius O’Brien, Mr. Flood, Lord Annaly, Mr. Hussey Burgh, Mr. delivered to the Viceroy in June and July, 1779.’ S. P. O. Abridged.



## SECTION IV.

MEANWHILE Ireland was arming, and arming in a form which, however convenient to an embarrassed treasury, might prove embarrassing should Lord North resolve, after all, on maintaining the restraining laws. After Paul Jones's visit to Carrickfergus, Belfast applied to the Viceroy for troops. The Viceroy sent down sixty dragoons as the most which he was able to spare. The Militia Act had been passed. On the part of the gentlemen there was no objection to the Viceroy's enrolling as many regiments as he pleased. Sir Lucius O'Brien among others most strongly urged him to lose not a moment in providing the country with its constitutional garrison.<sup>1</sup> A governor, the most moderately qualified for his duties, should have known that if there was to be a military force in the kingdom he ought himself to have the control and disposition of it. Lord Buckinghamshire unfortunately was embarrassed for money. The taxes could not be collected owing to the distress. The customs were yielding next to nothing owing to the collapse of trade. To borrow was difficult, if not impossible, and to embody the militia would require a large sum. As matters stood, Belfast, Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Galway, were wholly unprotected. There were not soldiers enough in the country for the commonest police duties. The militia could not be

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Viceroy to Lord Weymouth, June 30 1779.'

raised for want of funds. The summer was coming back, and with the summer would return the pirates and privateers. Gentlemen who had property to lose grew impatient and insisted that if Government could not protect them they must raise corps among themselves, for their own defence. Lord Buckinghamshire did not much like the proposal. A few companies already raised had assumed a *quasi*-political complexion, but it was impossible to forbid men to take care of their own property. If volunteer corps were formed they would be under the command of great peers and commoners who were men of property and were Protestants as well. The Catholic Relief made a difficulty in refusing permission. 'The Protestants,' the Viceroy said, 'might plausibly have murmured if they had been forbidden to arm in their own defence when the Legislature was protecting men whom they had so long deemed their inveterate enemies.'<sup>1</sup>

The English Cabinet was clearer sighted than the Viceroy. They perceived at any rate that to allow an indiscriminate arming of the Irish people, or even of the Protestant Irish, in their present humour, was exceedingly ill-judged. Weymouth wrote in haste that Lord Buckinghamshire must prevent the corps from assembling, that he must take their arms from them, that he must insist on nominating the officers himself. To this there was but one answer, it was too late for such steps; perhaps, in the absence of a militia, they were

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, May 24, 1779.' S. P. O.

from the beginning impossible. The movement had spread as if the whole country had a purpose in it ready prepared. To interfere there must be a British army, and there were not 3000 British soldiers in the island; the executive was so feeble, and the population so ill affected, that even in the quietest times a convicted murderer could not be carried to the gallows without a military guard to prevent a rescue.<sup>1</sup>

Every hour the problem became more abstruse. If the Protestants were to arm, the Catholics considered the example worth imitating. They, too, began to form into companies, and had they continued there would probably have been immediate bloodshed. Urgent representations, however, being made to their leaders in private, they desisted. Not so the country gentlemen. In vain Weymouth bade the Viceroy pour water on the fire. Corps was added to corps. The suspicion that the Government was alarmed increased the rate at which they were multiplied, and as the volunteers gathered confidence from their numbers they began naturally to consider what effect their assembly might have on the public question about which the country was so anxious. It was said openly that in the presence of such a force England could no longer refuse Ireland free trade, and carried as they were off their feet by enthusiasm and excitement the chance for the present was gone of holding the Irish Parliament in leading strings by the old methods. 'The occasional favour of Government would not induce men to incur the odium of their country at

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord Weymouth, May 24, 1779.'

so critical a time.'<sup>1</sup> The troubled Viceroy could find but one consolation. There were no symptoms of treason. The noble lords and gentlemen who were at the head of the movement were above suspicion of collusion with the enemy. The country was never in better spirit to resist invasion. 1779

It was still possible to call out the militia as a counterpoise, and if the country could be considered safe from invasion the volunteers might, perhaps, dissolve to escape expense. Buckinghamshire applied to Weymouth for money. Weymouth answered that there was none to send. The Viceroy must call together the Parliament. The Viceroy said that if he was ordered to call the Parliament, and to call it three months before the usual time, he would obey, but he would not be answerable for the consequences. Free trade would, in fact, have to be conceded at all events. There was no escape from it.<sup>2</sup> A demand for money for the militia might lead to further pretensions, which it would be difficult to satisfy.

In arming thus rapidly the country owed its escape from a dangerous adventure. The volunteer corps had been formed not an hour too soon. Encouraged by his exploits in the past summer, Paul Jones had collected a formidable squadron at L'Orient, a ship of the line, three powerful frigates, a sloop, and a heavy eighteen-gun cutter.<sup>3</sup> His crews amounted to 2000 men, and

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, June 12.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'To Weymouth, July 12.' S. P. O.

<sup>3</sup> The ship was 'La Grande

his intention was to land at Galway, Derry, and wherever else there was a prospect of plunder. He <sup>1779</sup> left L'Orient on the 12th of August. At the end of the month he was in Ballinskellig's Bay, looking out for prizes, and had Ireland been as unprepared as in the previous years, he would have ventured undoubtedly a desperate exploit of some kind, and perhaps have roused the Western Irish into revolt.<sup>1</sup> His many secret friends along the coast must have informed him that it was no longer safe to risk a landing. He bore away to the North Sea, where he fell in with the summer fleet from the Baltic, and after a desperate fight had the honour of capturing two English frigates, the 'Serapis' and the 'Countess of Scarborough,' and carrying them as prizes into the Texel.

It was no slight thing to have protected Ireland from an attack by a force capable of such an exploit. The fresh proof at once of the reality of the danger and of their own ability to encounter it, added new impulse to the volunteer movement which the Viceroy had been forbidden to encourage. He found himself invited 'by several most respectable noblemen' who had formed companies, to issue muskets for them from the Government stores. He asked advice from the Irish Council. The Irish Council told him that he must comply, and the muskets were given out. By the end of Sep-

Ville,' of 64 guns; the frigates, 'Le Bon Homme Richard,' of 40, the 'Alliance,' 36, and the 'Patrie,'

<sup>1</sup> 'Depositions taken by Rev. Doctor Day, at Tralee, August, 1779.' MSS. Dublin Castle.

tember over forty thousand men had been enrolled and armed, under no authority except what they might organize for themselves. Some had been raised by associations, some by the merchants' companies in the towns, most of them by the peers and country gentlemen: the result being that at a moment of national discontent when men of all creeds and parties were united to demand from England a repeal of her unjust legislation, Ireland suddenly found herself in possession of an army of her own which there was no force in the country capable of resisting.

Under these circumstances the Irish Parliament was about to meet, and the patriot leaders had determined that the occasion of their own strength and England's weakness should not pass from them unused. Notwithstanding the agitation which had been raised in England itself in favour of measures of relief to Ireland, the Cabinet was still unable to resolve on frank and free concessions. The Viceroy had been told at first that he was to evade the subject in the Speech from the Throne. He had objected humbly that to be entirely silent 'would indicate a settled resolution' to concede nothing. It would be difficult, he admitted, to avoid creating expectations on one side or embarrassments on the other; he proposed 'to be wary in his language and inform the House merely that particulars would be laid before them which would enable the national wisdom' to devise measures for the relief of the kingdom;<sup>1</sup> but

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, September 26, 1779.'

something or other it was necessary that he should say. Retouched, and rendered still more vague by Weymouth's pen, the draft of a Speech, conceived in this spirit, had been returned from England.

The Viceroy's secrets were ill kept. Half his council being in league with the patriots, the purport of  
 1779 the Speech was known some days before the opening, and on a soft October afternoon, Henry Grattan, Denis Daly, and Hussey Burgh sate on the shingle beach at Bray, with the transparent water washing at their feet, to arrange the approaching campaign. Hussey Burgh being a servant of the Crown thought it indecent to take a leading part, and, after a general conversation, left his two friends to themselves. The address would naturally be an echo of the Speech. Grattan and Daly resolved on moving its rejection pure and simple. The session was to open on the 12th. As the day approached the Viceroy's uneasiness did not diminish. The Council were called for a rehearsal of the Speech. Hussey Burgh and the Duke of Leinster, though they were both in Dublin, refused to attend. The plan of the Castle was, that if the address was opposed, John Foster<sup>1</sup> should move for a committee to inquire into the state of the nation, and that a similar motion should be made in the Upper House. The intention was betrayed, and at the advice of Barry Yelverton,<sup>2</sup> Grattan,

<sup>1</sup> Son of Anthony Foster, Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, and created Lord Oriel.

<sup>2</sup> Then a distinguished barrister, Member for Carrickfergus, afterwards Chief Baron and Lord Avonmore.

when the time came, moved, instead of a rejection, an equivalent amendment, 'That it was not by temporary expedients, but by a free export, that the nation was now to be saved from impending ruin.' Hely Hutchinson, though no one in private had more effectively pressed on the Government the necessity of a radical change of policy, exerted himself to protect them from a hostile vote. Scott, the Attorney-General, spoke powerfully on the same side; but the corruption on which they had relied failed at the hour of trial, as it deserved to fail. The purchased 'servants of the Crown' fell from their allegiance. Hussey Burgh suggested that for Free Trade, if the Government disliked the word, might be read 'opening of the ports.' Flood seeing the patriot tide was rising again, returned to his old allegiance, snapped the cords which bound him to the Castle, and with a half apology for having ever taken office<sup>1</sup> insisted that the amendment should go to Free Trade. 'Ireland asked no more and would not be satisfied with less.' In vain Sir Robert Heron, the Secretary, pleaded that such amendments could only produce ill consequences; the friends of Government, purchased so expensively at the elections, could not be expected to be more submissive than a Prime Sergeant and a Vice-Treasurer. The Castle did not venture a division, and the amendment to the address was carried unanimously. The next day, the 13th, the usual vote of thanks to the Viceroy was proposed. With the Earl of

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<sup>1</sup> He allowed himself to say that 'the Vice-Treasurership had been the unsolicited gift of his sovereign.'



Buckinghamshire, an innocent automaton, there was no quarrel, and it was allowed to pass; but Tom Conolly in the Commons, and the Duke of Leinster in the Lords, moved along with it a vote of thanks to the Volunteers of Ireland, and this was carried with enthusiasm. On the 14th, the Volunteer Corps of Dublin, with the Duke of Leinster at their head, lined the streets between College Green and the Castle, when the Speaker and the entire Lower House marched in procession to present the amended address. The Viceroy had appealed to Pery to prevent what could be intended only as a display of force. Pery said it was impossible, and advised the Viceroy to appear to sympathise.<sup>1</sup>

‘In the present disposition of the House of Commons,’ Lord Buckinghamshire wrote five days later, ‘it will be difficult to resist the motions now in contemplation. Unless his majesty in his answer holds out strong hopes on the subject of commerce, motions will be strongly pressed to reduce the Establishment. The Money Bill will be limited to six months. The Duke of Leinster, Mr. Conolly, and the Prime Sergeant are decidedly hostile to us.’ There was but one hope. Even in the midst of the effervescence, base motives were still at work with the more experienced politicians. ‘If some popular orator could be brought over’ the apostate members might yet be recovered. ‘The Duke,’ he said, ‘has been with me this morning and

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, October 13 and 14, 1779.’ S. P. O.

presents his compliments; his brother, the seaman, being promoted, is a point insisted on.'<sup>1</sup>

Unhappily, time pressed. The Duke's brother, the seaman, could not be made an admiral in a moment. Unless trade was opened Parliament would vote no more war taxes. It might even appropriate the existing duties to the payment of debt. Nay, having now a force of its own, it might abolish the military establishments. 'You must give way,' Heron wrote on the 25th to Sir Stanien Porter; 'so far, at least, as to open to Ireland the Colonial trade; their woollens being legally exported cannot, to say the least of it, be more prejudicial to Great Britain than the smuggling them.'

A frank answer from England would not, perhaps, have checked the torrent which had now broken loose, but at least it might have made the stream flow in good humour. An answer came on the 1st of No-<sup>November</sup>vember, but enigmatic as an oracle from the Delphic priestess. The King was said to be sorry for the distresses of Ireland, to be attentive to her interests, and to be always ready to concur in measures which, on mature consideration, should be thought conducive 'to the general welfare of all his subjects.' 'All his subjects' comprehended the monopolists of Liverpool: Irish suspicion flamed into a blaze; and on King William's birthday, four days later, the volunteers, with the Duke of Leinster again at their head, paraded in front of the statue outside the Parliament house. Flags were dis-

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Viceroy to Lord Weymouth, October 18. Most secret.'  
S. P. O.

played with impassioned blazonries—‘Relief to Ireland,’ ‘The Volunteers of Ireland,’ ‘A Short Money Bill,’ ‘Fifty thousand of us ready to die for our country.’ More significantly still, two cannon were trailed round the pedestal, with an emblem, ‘Free Trade or this:’ and amidst the roar of artillery, musketry volleys, and the shouts of ten thousand voices, Dublin intimated that it must have its way, or England must be prepared for the consequences.

For once Ireland had a definitely just cause, and was strong in virtue of it.

‘If the expectations of this kingdom are not received with lenity,’ wrote the fluttered imbecile who represented the majesty of the Crown, ‘every species of disorder may be apprehended. Rational men are seriously alarmed. Those who were principal promoters of the volunteer companies feelingly lament their own achievements. You will pity the situation of a man who has laboured uniformly to do his duty divested of every other consideration. What a reflection! that in the present critical situation of the British empire, the kingdom under my care should contribute such an addition to the already almost insurmountable difficulties of English government. Oppressed with the reflection consequential to this idea, it is too much in addition to be fretted hourly with inadmissible solicitations, and to be obliged to frequently combat suspicions of a duplicity to the which my heart has ever been a stranger. Torn by a thousand conflicting passions, it is a necessary duty to assume a face of calmness, and I

must not risk, however provoked, by manifesting well-justified resentment, to lose any chance of support to his majesty's service.'<sup>1</sup>

The House of Commons had shown spirit, but its fervour was not equal to the temperature out of doors, and required to be stimulated. The Attorney-general, Scott,<sup>2</sup> speaking of the demonstration on the 4th, had asked whether Parliament existed to register the pleasure of the volunteers. He had been heard with more favour than the populace approved; and on the 15th, early in the morning, a drum beat in the liberties behind St. Patrick's Cathedral. A vast body of artisans armed with bludgeons, cutlasses, and pistols, gathered at the call, and made their way to Scott's house, in Harcourt-place. Finding that he had gone to the Four Courts, part of them remained to break his windows; part followed to the courts swearing they would have him out. He had been warned in time and had taken refuge in the Castle. The mob, not caring to encounter the cannon there, surged off to College Green, beset the doors of the House of Commons, and, as the members came up, made them alight from their carriages and swear to vote for Free Trade and a Short Money Bill. The Mayor was sent for to the Speaker's chamber. In the afternoon a squadron of dragoons was brought down to the barracks, and at the Speaker's requisition the Mayor went to the doors to give them orders to act.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Hillsborough, November 8, 1779.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Lord Clonmell and Chief Justice.

The rioters had gathered within the railings out of reach of the horses. The unfortunate man no sooner appeared than cutlasses were flourished over his head; and he was told that the first word that he uttered to the soldiers was to be the last that he should speak in this world. More discreet than valiant he shrunk back into the passage. The dragoons, finding that they were to receive no orders, rode away as they came, the House adjourned, and the people were left masters of the field.<sup>1</sup> The volunteers, who had charged themselves with the peace of the country, might have gained credit by interposing; but they preferred to remain passive; and for an entire day Dublin was in possession of a band of ruffians. Yelverton, when the House reassembled the next morning with plumes somewhat ruffled, spoke in the people's favour. Scott, who had narrowly escaped with his life, called Yelverton a 'seneschal of sedition.' Yelverton replied with calling Scott 'the uniform drudge of every English administration.' Grattan interposed between the angry combatants. The House asserted its dignity by a resolution condemning the assemblies of mobs to coerce the debates. The Mayor and Sheriff were called to the bar to be reprimanded for their cowardice. The Mayor said that if he had told the dragoons to act they would have used their sabres, and would have hurt some of the poor people. The House submitted to the explanation, the Speaker gravely saying that 'the Mayor's unwillingness to endanger the lives of his fellow-citizens might deserve

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, November 15.'

commendation, but that if such violence was repeated lenity to the guilty might prove fatal to the innocent.' <sup>1</sup>

The tone assumed in the Parliament in England did not tend to smooth the Viceroy's course. Lord Hillsborough, an Irishman who preferred making his political career in the more important country, had ventured to say, and say with apparent authority there, that Irish distress was a child of the imagination, or if real was due only to laziness. The war and the bankrupt state of the Irish treasury had made it necessary for the secretary to ask for additional taxation. Grattan moved at once that in the presence of so much general poverty it was inexpedient to grant new taxes, and carried his resolution by 170 votes to 47. The secretary then asked for the ordinary supplies to be granted as usual for two years. The House, by this time thoroughly infected with the spirit of the country, accepted the amendment which the Viceroy had dreaded, and passed a Six Months' Money Bill, by 138 to 100.<sup>2</sup> It was in these debates that Hussey Burgh made his reputation as an orator by the famous sentence so often quoted. Some one had said Ireland was at peace. 'Talk not to me of peace,' said Hussey Burgh; 'Ireland is not at peace; it is smothered war. England has sown her laws as dragon's teeth, and they have sprung up as

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Viceroy to Lord Weymouth, November 16.'--*Commons' Journals, Ireland*, November 17.

<sup>2</sup> A very full house for Ireland. The whole number of mem-

bers was 300; but some had seats in the English Parliament; some were in the army; some always were purposely absent, intimating that they were open to negotiation.

armed men.’<sup>1</sup> Never yet had Grattan so moved the Irish House of Commons as it was moved at these words. From the floor the applause rose to the gallery. From the gallery it was thundered to the crowd at the door. From the door it rung through the city. As the tumult calmed down Hussey Burgh rose again, and, amidst a renewed burst of cheers, declared that he resigned the office which he held under the Crown. ‘The gates of promotion are shut,’ exclaimed Grattan, ‘and the gates of glory are opened.’

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<sup>1</sup> These words are sometimes quoted as referring to the Penal Laws. They had nothing to do with the Penal Laws, and related entirely to the restrictions on trade.

## SECTION V.

LORD NORTH'S Cabinet had to the last persuaded themselves that the storm would pass over. The King had recommended Ireland to the consideration of <sup>1779</sup> the English Parliament at the opening of the session in November. The Ministers, however, had fought in both Houses for delay, till the news of the short Money Bill opened their eyes. They had not now to reckon with miserable Celts, who could be trampled on with comparative impunity. The iniquitous legislation of past generations had roused all ranks, both races and both creeds, to a common indignation. The resource of playing party against party would serve no longer. The first exasperation was vented upon the Viceroy. 'You send us the opinions of others,' Lord Hillsborough angrily wrote to him. 'Why don't you send us your own? The King desires that you will let us know your sentiments immediately.'<sup>1</sup>

It was unjust to blame Lord Buckinghamshire; he had already told Lord Weymouth, and he now again repeated to Lord Hillsborough, that if Ireland was to be restored to tranquillity, the trade restrictions must be given up, and that the repeal must be immediate and complete.<sup>2</sup> The intelligent part of England had arrived at the same conclusion. On the 1st of December

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, December 1.' Substance of a long brusque letter.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, December 9.'



Lord Shelburne spoke at length in the Upper House of the abominable system by which the affairs of Ireland had long been carried on. The Irish, he said, were now determined to have their trade restored to them, and he moved a vote of censure on the Cabinet for having delayed concession so long. Lord Camden followed him, insisting on the impolicy of alienating the Irish people at a moment so critical in the fortunes of the empire. In the Commons, Mr. Burke, with even greater effectiveness, contrasted the terms offered to America with the obstinate perseverance in wrong towards his own long-suffering countrymen. The Irish, he said, had learnt at last that justice was to be had from England only when demanded at the sword's point. They were now in arms with a good cause, and they would either have redress or they would end the connection between the two islands.

Opinion was pronouncing itself so decisively that the Ministers escaped censure only by pleading that the laws complained of were none of theirs. They were inherited from the past century. They had been wrought into the constitution, and Parliament had always refused to reconsider them. Acquitted, however, of responsibility for the past, the Cabinet could only earn their full pardon by consenting to instant reparation. The repeal of the Restriction Acts was proposed on the spot, and swept through both Houses with extraordinary spirit. A copy was sent to Ireland before the forms were completed, to allay the tempest, ere it could swell into fresh acts of violence.

'I congratulate your excellency,' wrote Lord Hillsborough, as if the credit of what had been done belonged to the Cabinet, 'on this important event. On its being proposed to his majesty that a commission should be prepared to pass this Act, his majesty declared that he would go to the House in person to give his assent to a measure conferring so considerable an advantage on his faithful subjects of Ireland.'<sup>1</sup>

The Irish Parliament meantime, while waiting for the resolution of England, had been usefully occupied. The leaders of the Opposition, if the Viceroy was to be believed, were as much as ever influenced by personal motives, and in a moment of success so sudden and unlooked for, were each aspiring to make capital out of it for his own advancement. 'When,' Lord Buckinghamshire said, 'the bravery and determined spirit which personally distinguishes this nation is considered, the little feminine jealousy and suspicion which they manifest in political business is scarcely credible. I have hardly ever met with a man who will believe that the whole truth is fairly told him. Every moment of attention which you show to an individual is measured, and a whisper is a mortal offence.'<sup>2</sup> Perhaps experience of the whispers of vicerealty might in some degree justify alarm. Only a few weeks before, Lord Buckinghamshire had been looking for a road out of his difficulties by 'bringing over' a popular orator. Whether

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, December 23, 1779.'

<sup>2</sup> 'To Lord Hillsborough, December 15.'

honestly or dishonestly, however, the Opposition were now addressing themselves to the removal of genuine mischiefs. On the 1st of December the Speaker presented the heads of a bill aimed specially at the object which had been attempted unsuccessfully in the Catholic Relief Bill—the repeal of the Test clause in the Act of Anne. It had been anticipated that a second effort would be made in the Presbyterian interest during the session ; and the Cabinet had ordered the Viceroy to throw every obstruction in the way. But the House of Commons was no longer amenable to the usual influences. The Bill of Repeal was sent before the Irish Council for transmission by a unanimous vote. If it went to England it was unlikely that under existing circumstances the Cabinet would risk a fresh quarrel on a secondary subject. If the measure was to be stopped at all it must be stopped in Ireland, and the bishops in the Council, consistent to the last, desired to strain a power which it was doubtful if the Council constitutionally possessed, and suppressed the bill on their own responsibility. The Chancellor, the Attorney-general, and Mr. Foster warned them against so dangerous an experiment. The bill went over, and this time was returned, and the Presbyterians—the right-arm of Irish Protestantism, though never admitted to the privileges of the establishment, and ensuring by their exclusion its eventual fall—were no longer insulted by being declared unfit to hold office, civil or military, above the rank of a parish constable.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Hillsborough, December 31.' Secret.

Another attempt was less successful. Nothing in the Irish administration was more scandalous than the tenure of judges during pleasure only. <sup>1780</sup> It degraded an office which ought to have been guarded most scrupulously from contact with parliamentary corruption into an instrument for controlling or influencing the Irish bar. It stood already condemned in a speech from the throne. Yet it not only survived, but Lord Harcourt had pointedly objected to a change, and every effort made by Parliament had failed. Hoping that they might now find England more pliant, the Commons again sent over the heads of a bill to assimilate the Irish to the English tenure. Once more this bill was rejected, the Viceroy tacitly admitting the character of the objection to it in a passing allusion.

‘As the having the commissions of the Irish judges the same as in England has been a favourite wish in this country, it was never, as I understand, thought expedient to oppose the heads in the House of Commons; the reasons upon which those heads have been disapproved by his majesty’s British servants not being of a nature to be agitated here even in quiet times.’<sup>1</sup>

Ill pleased that the responsibility of rejection should be thrown on them, the Cabinet had blamed the Viceroy for not having stopped the bill in the House of Commons. Weighed, perhaps, in accurate balances, this measure was as important as free trade itself; but it was a subject on which the Irish public had scarcely troubled themselves to think; and whether it was

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<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, January 26, 1780.’

allowed or rejected was comparatively of trifling moment beside the all-important, all-absorbing question, Would or would not England abandon her commercial monopoly? The reports of the debates at Westminster had been read with passionate avidity, and had prepared men's minds to hear that England had yielded. Nevertheless, when the certainty arrived, when the copy of the Act of repeal was delivered and laid by the Viceroy before the two Houses, the news seemed almost too good to be true. To these mischievous and wicked restrictive Acts the Irish had justly referred the wretchedness that weighed on them. In their impetuosity and eagerness they forgot that when an evil had been of long growth, time would be needed for recovery. They conceived that the repeal would be as the removal of a spell, that Ireland would at once blossom into abundance, and every bare back be clothed and every stomach be filled. In gratitude for the so intensely desired boon, the wrongs of a century were forgotten or forgiven. Dublin was illuminated. Addresses of gratitude were sent over from the two Houses. The happy Viceroy reported that his woes were over, and that 'no peevish question was allowed to cloud the sunshine of the brightest day the kingdom ever knew.'<sup>1</sup> The dispositions of nations unfortunately do not change so easily.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, December 28.'

## SECTION VI.

THE worst effect of unjust legislation is the difficulty of retiring from it without causing worse evils than those which are removed. Concessions necessary, because right in themselves, shake the principle of authority when they are yielded to menace. The momentary gratitude is succeeded by the recollection that the wrong would have been continued had there been strength to continue it. The powers of State have been transferred for the time from the rulers to the ruled; and the subject takes his own measure of the changed situation. He conceives that he has established his claim to be a better judge of what is good for him than those who had confessedly abused their superiority, and he proceeds at once to make fresh demands where justice is less clearly on his side. Hostile feelings and hostile lines of action begin again to manifest themselves. The superior power having sacrificed its pride and interest considers itself entitled to reap a reward in a return of good feeling, and resents the persistence in an attitude for which it conceives that there is no longer a reason. Thus measures which promise best for reconciliation are found often to have made the breach still wider.

A peculiarly unlucky complication at this moment spoilt the effects of the repeal of the restrictive Acts, and made England repent of having given way. The

embargo had led to a clandestine trade in salt meat with France and Spain. The Irish farmer considered that he had a natural right to defend himself against robbery, and had found both pleasure and profit in opening a market with the enemies of his oppressors. The embargo had been taken off, but the connections which had been opened could not be immediately broken. At the beginning of January it was ascertained that a Cork contractor was loading provision cargoes in the harbour, which were intended for the French fleet. Coming so immediately on what the English Cabinet regarded as an act of sublime generosity, they sent orders to the Viceroy to seize the contractor's vessels. The Viceroy was obliged to answer that if he attempted any such measure there would be violent resistance. It was a practical illustration of the meaning of trusting the military power in Ireland out of the hands of the constituted Government. It was not enough that when England was fighting single-handed against her revolted colonies and a European coalition, Irish politicians should take advantage of her difficulties. They were choosing the moment when their requests had been granted to give active help to her enemies.

'It appears,' Lord Hillsborough wrote sarcastically to the unlucky Viceroy, 'to be little short of a declaration that Government in Ireland is dissolved. Dependent as we are for information upon your excellency, we know not what to recommend, and in this dilemma we are left to lament the unhappy situation of affairs. It is impossible to reflect without concern and astonish-

ment that, while his majesty is taking every step in his power to give satisfaction to his Irish subjects, there is apprehension of dangerous violence if <sup>1780</sup> measures are taken to prevent his enemies from receiving supplies from them, without which they would find it difficult to carry on the war. We cannot bid you lay on an embargo in the face of possible consequences, or send a message to Parliament which might compromise the prerogative. But is there no member who would have public spirit enough to stand up in the House of Commons, and move an address to your excellency to prevent the enemies' fleet from being victualled from Ireland? I recommend your excellency to exert yourself on this occasion. Stopping these provisions is equal to the gain of a battle at sea, and may go further towards giving his majesty superiority over his enemies.' <sup>1</sup>

Lord Hillsborough should have known his countrymen better than to make extravagant suggestions. The Viceroy laid his letter before the Privy Council. The Privy Council told him that 'for a private member to move an address of such a kind would increase the general ill-feeling. There was but one course to be pursued. The Government must purchase the contractor's stores for the Crown.' The Viceroy was helpless. The House of Commons was under the dictation of the mob. 'The situation of England was well understood, and they meant to take advantage of it.' He did not mean, he said, that 'the indulgences lately granted would fail ultimately of being useful consequences to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, February 6, 1780.'



the empire.' 'Barring insurrection or something nearly resembling it, he hoped to get through the remainder of the session without fresh collision.' But he could succeed only 'by closet interviews with independent members.'

'I tell these gentlemen,' he wrote, 'that however  
March, 1780, distressing a quarrel between the two kingdoms  
might be to England, it would necessarily be sub-  
versive of the Protestant interest here, and ruinous to  
Ireland. As they are pleased to allow me more merit than  
belongs to me, I tell them this consideration should have  
some little weight with them in pressing measures which  
must render the remainder of my life miserable. I  
state myself as pledged to his majesty for the gratitude  
and full satisfaction of Ireland. I have not, indeed, in  
my despatches risked such an assertion, but I thought  
in so particular an instance a slight deviation from fact  
meritorious.'<sup>1</sup>

The Cork contract did not stand alone. The successes of Paul Jones had fired the emulation of the Irish smugglers who had set up business on their own account. The visits of the American privateers were confined to the late spring and summer. The Irish were on the spot and could choose their own season. At the beginning of March two large cutters, the 'Black Prince' and the 'Black Princess,' showed themselves under French colours in the Irish Channel. They were Irish built and manned by Irish sailors. They had taken out commissions at Dunkirk, and, armed to the teeth,

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, February 17.'

occupied themselves in stopping the mail packets between Holyhead and Dublin, plundering the passengers, sinking the bags, and holding the vessels to ransom. The 'Princess' was the largest cutter ever seen on the coast,<sup>1</sup> long, black-sided, swift as a race-horse, and carrying eighteen nine-pounders. For four months these rovers remained masters of the Channel. Other minor craft started into similar activity. The Waterford and Milford packet was taken, 'our bishop's daughter on board,' and ransomed for 160 guineas. Waterford Harbour was practically blockaded. The merchants enquired ironically whether England had given them back their trade only to let it be destroyed by negligence: if this was the meaning of English sovereignty of the seas, the sooner it came to an end the better.<sup>2</sup>

The Viceroy described his situation as 'beyond measure disagreeable.' While affairs were going on thus fatuously out of doors, the Parliament was equally busy in adding to his sorrows. On the 1st of March the Irish Lords and Commons were invited to express by formal resolution their gratitude for the repeal of the trade laws. Mr. Grattan, supported by Yelverton, intimated that if much had been done more remained to be done. The spirit of Molyneux was awake again. Ireland was still in bondage, so long as she was bound by laws to which she had not herself consented. Poyning's Act must be modified. The Act passed in

<sup>1</sup> She was commanded by a man named MacCarty, of Newry.

<sup>2</sup> *Miscellaneous MSS.* S. P. O., March, April, May, and June, 1780.

England in the sixth year of George the First<sup>1</sup> must be repealed, and Ireland's birthright as a free nation must be at once restored to her.

The leap from regulations of trade to political independence was across a chasm too wide as yet for the nerves of the majority of the members. They could remember that England had just done what was right and liberal. They could see that constitutional questions ought not to be forced at the point of the bayonet. Even the Duke of Leinster thought the time improper for political agitation. Grattan had argued that Ireland was still at England's mercy, that what England had done England could undo, and as to the unsuitableness of the time England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity. The House could not at the moment rise to the level of these high reasonings. The address of thanks was passed without an amendment. But the vision which Grattan had opened had set the Irish pulses tumultuously beating. He had led the country to its late victory. He perhaps understood the condition under which the millennium would be realized, though as yet it delayed to appear. He had Lord Charlemont and Lord Carysfort with him in the House of Peers. He had the Dublin mob with him outside

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<sup>1</sup> This Act, round which so severe a battle was now to be fought, had originated in the Irish House of Peers having presumed to act as a Court of Ultimate Appeal. The Act declared 'that the King and Parliament of Great Britain had authority to bind the kingdom and people of Ireland;' and that the House of Lords in Ireland had no jurisdiction 'to affirm or reverse' any judgment given in the King's Courts of law there. 'All proceedings before the said House of Lords upon any such judgment were thereby declared to be null and void.'

the Parliament walls. His words were like the seeds sown by the Indian jugglers, which germinate in a night and are grown to fulness of stature on the morrow. Supported, as he believed, by the greater number of gentlemen of property, the Viceroy had perhaps not very judiciously confirmed Grattan's language by hinting that if Ireland was so inveterately troublesome the late concessions might be rescinded.<sup>1</sup> The Irish in vapouring about liberty were less unpractical than they seemed. They were not only determined to protect themselves against a reversal of the late legislation, but they aspired to independence, that they might hasten the revival of their manufactures by retaliating on England with protective duties. The orders of the Cabinet were to oppose constitutional changes with all the power of the Crown, and to prevent any proposition tending in that direction from being transmitted. The patriots had chosen their ground for the next attack. Grattan gave notice that on the 19th of April he would move 'a declaration of Rights.' April 19 Mr. Bushe moved on the 18th for leave at a later period to

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<sup>1</sup> 'The epidemic madness so assiduously circulated by Lord Charlemont, Mr. Grattan and Lord Carysfort, does not prevail everywhere. Even Mr. Stuart, of Down (the first Lord Londonderry), is inclined to reason more temperately. Very limited indeed is the number of men of property who are not anxious to stifle ill-humour; but the temper of the inferior orders is in unpleasant fermentation. The

tenour of my language is that England begins to feel an honest indignation at the absurd ingratitude of this kingdom; and that the seditious ideas propagated here must, instead of obtaining unreasonable and ruinous concessions, tend ultimately to the rescinding of the favours conferred.—Lord Buckinghamshire to Lord Hillsborough, March 8.'

bring in a Mutiny Bill. Grattan's motion was to try the principle. Bushe's motion applied it in a signal instance. In 1692 a Mutiny Bill had been offered by Lord Sidney to the first Parliament which met after the Revolution. It had been thrown out in a fit of ill-temper, and the Irish army had since been provided for under the Annual Act of Great Britain. Mr. Bushe's object was to reclaim for the Irish Parliament its suspended privileges.

The Attorney-general opposed Bushe at the first stage. He protested against the imprudence of mooted so dangerous a question. He moved the adjournment of the House to get rid of it, and failed. Leave was given, and the Viceroy had to report that when the measure came on, the friends of Government meant to support it.

The day following Grattan opened his campaign in form, for the liberation of his country, and moved the two resolutions which became famous in Irish history.

1. The King, with the consent of the Parliament of Ireland, was alone competent to enact laws to bind Ireland.
2. Great Britain and Ireland were indissolubly united, but only under the tie of a common sovereign.

He spoke for two hours, and 'with the greatest warmth and enthusiasm.' He denounced the 6th of George I. as a general attack on the rights and liberties of Ireland. He appealed to the terms which had been

offered to America, to show how much might be extorted from England's fears if only demanded resolutely.

The Attorney-general had to reply at a disadvantage in a House which Grattan had made drunk with enthusiasm. He pointed out that the titles of half the estates in Ireland depended on British Acts of Parliament, and must become invalid if those Acts were declared unlawful. It was unnecessary, he said, it was inexpedient, ungrateful, even dangerous and injurious in a high degree, to agitate such questions. He moved the adjournment of the consideration of Grattan's resolution till September, equivalent to the English six months. The Attorney-general was supported by young Fitzgibbon,<sup>1</sup> who was now beginning to take part in the business of the House. So long as there were real grievances to be redressed, Fitzgibbon, careless of his professional prospects, had gone with the popular party. But none knew better than he, bred as he was from the very heart of the Irish people, the meaning of the revival of an Irish nationality. It meant a nationality not of the Irish Protestants, but of the Irish Catholic Celts. It meant, if successful, the undoing of the work of Elizabeth and James and Cromwell. It meant the overthrow of the Irish Church, and in some shape or other a struggle for the recovery of the lands.

Fitzgibbon's arguments sounded like foolishness. The House was in the humour of its predecessors in 1641, when analogous aspirations after liberty had been

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Clare, and Chancellor.

encouraged by England's embarrassment, but had issued in the massacre and the civil war. Very ominously a resolution of that Parliament was read out in the course of the debate, and was listened to with general applause.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the Attorney-general and Fitzgibbon not a member was found to defend the legislative authority of England. Flood and Hely Hutchinson only prevented the resolution from being carried by appealing to Irish generosity not to bear too heavily on England in her distress. The House adjourned without a division, and agreed that the proceedings should be passed over without being entered in the Journals.

It was 'with the utmost concern' that the Viceroy sent across an account of the debate.<sup>2</sup> There could no longer be a doubt that the Mutiny Bill would be carried. The English Act was indeed already treated as of no authority. Deserters from the army committed to prison under it were released by the magistrates. The Privy Council told the Viceroy that after the discussion of the 19th neither magistrates nor juries would enforce in Ireland a law passed by the British Parliament. The *Freeman's Journal* announced that the inclusion of Ireland in the British Mutiny Act was a step towards establishing a tyranny. The soldiers were invited to

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<sup>1</sup> 'It is voted upon question, *nullo contradicente*, that the subjects of this his majesty's kingdom are a free people, and to be governed only according to the common law of England, and statutes made and established in this kingdom of Ireland, and according to the lawful customs used in the same.'—*Commons' Journals*, July 26, 1641.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, April 20, 1780.'

leave their colours, and the gentry were warned against arresting them at their own peril.

Mr. Bushe's motion was fixed for the 8th of May. On the 7th the Viceroy summoned the Council; he informed them that his orders from England <sup>1780</sup> were to resist, and asked their opinions. The attendance was larger than usual, and the answer was all but unanimous. Agar, the Archbishop of Cashel, was for standing out. All the rest, English-born as well as Irish-born, the Chancellor, and the Duke of Leinster, Foster, Pery, Hutchinson, agreed that the British Mutiny Act could not be enforced in Ireland, and that the army would fall to pieces unless the Government consented to let Mr. Bushe's motion pass. Opposition could have no effect but to show the weakness of the English party.

This was not all. Private Members of Parliament wrote to protest against opposing it on the ground of the consequences to themselves from the support which they had given to the Government already. British authority rested on the army. The army without an Irish Mutiny Bill must disintegrate, and they would be sacrificed to the fury of the people.<sup>1</sup>

Finding himself deserted on so vital a measure, the Viceroy could only ask for time to learn the Cabinet's pleasure. When the motion came on, the Attorney-

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<sup>1</sup> "We have resisted popular questions, and exposed ourselves to the indignation of the people at large by supporting Government; but who is to defend us against their resentment, if the army, from the doubts now circulated, should be dissolved?"—Extract of letter enclosed by the Viceroy to Lord Hillsborough, May 8, 1780.'



General applied to have it postponed for a fortnight, and with difficulty obtained the House's consent, almost every one telling him that he would vote for it when finally brought in. Some members even in their places declared they would not, either as jurors or magistrates, 'suffer the British Mutiny law to be acted upon.'

'The whole tenour of the debate,' Lord Buckinghamshire said, 'leaves no room for doubt that few inferior magistrates will dare—if they were so disposed, as they are not—to act under that Mutiny law. Whether their opinion is right or wrong, the effect is the same, our best friends being of opinion that opposition will but rekindle the flame. We can offer in the House of Commons but a vain and embarrassing resistance. It will pass the Council also, and if rejected here it can only be by my refusing to certify.'<sup>2</sup>

Past experience had led the Cabinet to believe that the Irish meant less than they said. They set down much of what the Viceroy reported to them as bragadocio. Their orders remained as before. If Mr. Bushe's motion was so framed as to imply that the British Act was not in force in Ireland, Lord Buckinghamshire was to oppose it at every stage. Being made of weak materials, however, and evidently unwilling to interpose his sole authority, he was informed that if, in spite of his efforts, the Bill passed the Privy Council, 'his majesty would spare him an unusual step,' and that he might transmit it to England.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord Hillsborough, May 1.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord Hillsborough to the Viceroy, May 14.'

The fortnight passed away. On the 21st of May the Council was again assembled. The Viceroy laid before them the Cabinet's directions. He told them that if the heads of Mr. Bushe's Bill were carried, he apprehended they would be laid before the Parliament in England. He did not expect the servants of the Crown to vote against the motion. He did expect them not to vote against the Government.

Finding the Cabinet more resolute than they expected, the Patriots modified their purpose. Having talked so loudly, they were forced to proceed; but when Mr. Bushe produced his Bill, it was found to have been so drawn as to avoid a distinct affirmation that the British Act did not apply to Ireland. The language could be construed into an expression of anxiety, that the law existing already should be more efficiently executed. Even thus modified, the Attorney-General said he must oppose the introduction of any Bill whatsoever upon the subject. A division was forced, and he was heavily defeated. The heads were passed rapidly through the two Houses. The progress through the Council was obstructed, but was accomplished at last, and the Bill was transmitted to England at the beginning of July.

Again there was a pause, as there had been at the beginning of the session when the ultimatum July, 1780, was sent over on Free-trade. The excitement, however, was now far greater, the hopes entertained more ambitious, the general feeling more irritated. The army was a peculiarly sore subject. The towns on

the coast, in fear real or pretended of the privateers, beset the Castle with demands for protection. Angry motions were made in the House of Lords. If Ireland was a part of the British Empire, Ireland it was said had a right to be defended; while the handful of Government troops remaining in the country were demoralized by the invitations to the soldiers to desert and the impunity allowed to desertion.

To assist England in coming to a resolution, and to let the Cabinet understand what it was with which they would really have to reckon, the Volunteers became confessed politicians. The Duke of Leinster took the chair while the Dublin corps passed resolutions that Ireland should be free. Ireland would make her own laws in her own Parliament, and obey no others. The Volunteers as Ireland's champion army intended to have it so. As if to assert in the most distinct manner that they owed no obedience to the Castle, and would accept no orders from it, they elected their own commander-in-chief; and Lord Charlemont, the most amiable, the most enthusiastic, the most feeble of revolutionary heroes, allowed himself to wear the title of General of the Patriot Army of Ireland.

These displays were visibly connected with the plan too successfully pursued to weaken and demoralize the British regiments. As if to contrast their own brilliant condition with the shrivelled numbers and shattered discipline of the regular troops, they proceeded, while the Mutiny Act was under consideration in England, to

hold reviews in the North. Lord Charlemont went down accompanied by Grattan, who was now on every man's lip as the liberator of his country. The half Americanised artisans of Belfast and Newry, officered by attorneys and shopkeepers, glittered glorious in their new uniforms. Ireland was free; Ireland was a nation. The strings long silent of the Irish harp were sounding in the breeze; the green flag was blowing out with the emblem blazoned on its folds, 'Hibernia tandem libera,' Ireland at length free: free with the help of the arms which had been begged at the gate of Dublin Castle; free from the fell authority which, notwithstanding its stupid tyranny and still more stupid negligence, had given Ireland its laws and its language, had prevented its inhabitants from destroying each other like howling and hungry wolves, and at least enabled them to exist;—free from this, but not free from sloth and ignorance, from wild imaginations, from political dishonesty which had saturated the tissue of her being, and required stronger medicine to purge it than the shouting of 50,000 volunteers.

No doubt, however, the spectacle was imposing. The English Whigs sent their deputies to applaud and admire. Lord Camden, whose son was to learn by and by the real meaning of these fine doings, came over as Lord Charlemont's guest, to make speeches about America, to bid the Volunteers remember that England would never forgive them, to tell them that they must stand to their arms or they were lost. All was rapture—bearded men falling into one another's arms as

brothers, in radiant tears, swearing that they would be free or die ; bowing before Grattan as before a saviour newly sent from heaven ; and hearing from Grattan's lips the delightful assurance that theirs was the spirit which made liberty secure.

But the last battle of the session had still to be fought, and the Liberator had to descend once  
August, 1780 more into the arena. August came, bringing with it the heads of Bills which had been sent to England. The Mutiny Bill was among them. Some concession even on this point the Cabinet had been driven to make, but it was returning in a form deemed as insulting as it was injurious. The right of the Irish Parliament had been allowed, but allowed for once only. In England the Mutiny Bill was annual. The heads of Mr. Bushe's Bill made it biennial. The limitation of time had been struck out, and the duration assigned to it in the Bill as corrected by the Cabinet was perpetual.

Rumour had been already busy with the report of the intended atrocity. Grattan, fresh from the tented field and the adulations of the Volunteers, gave notice that if the change had been made he would oppose the Bill in any shape ; the King should have no army in Ireland. When the House seemed to hesitate he threatened that if he was not supported he would secede from Parliament and appeal to the people. The fact proving true, he moved to restore the expunged clause—a motion equivalent to rejection, as the Bill must have been lost for the year. He was beaten by a

large majority.<sup>1</sup> The Perpetual Mutiny Bill became law, and he did *not* secede. Irishmen sometimes say more on such matters than they mean. But in fact his assistance was required on another subject scarcely less important. The Supply Bill had returned also, and also, like its companion, altered. No sooner had the Irish trade been opened than the forcing system was at once to be applied to it. Ireland had suffered for a century under English monopolies. It was now Ireland's turn. She was allowed, under the new regulations, to import raw sugar from the West Indies on the same terms as Great Britain. But free trade was to no purpose if England was allowed to conspire in another form against Ireland's prosperity by underselling the Irish sugar manufacturers in their own market. They had included in the Supply Bill a protection duty against British loaf-sugar, and this duty the English Council had refused to sanction.

Had the Irish people been capable of reflection, they would have perceived that England was really protecting the Irish consumer from his own countrymen. In ordinary times even the cry of English treachery would not have betrayed them into an illusion so absurd as that under which they fell: but in the delirium of imagined liberty they had parted with their senses. They could see only that England, unable to encounter them by force, was insidiously stealing back from them their victory.

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<sup>1</sup> 114 to 62.

Dissatisfied with the vote on the Mutiny Bill, distrusting Parliament therefore, and responding, as it were, to Grattan's appeal, the Volunteers of Dublin assembled as supreme arbiters of Irish policy, and announced their pleasure and their sentiments. In a series of resolutions they declared that the alteration of the Sugar Bill and the passing of the Perpetual Mutiny Bill rendered the expectation of free trade delusive, and contradicted the sentiments which they had believed would actuate the representatives of the people to emancipate the kingdom from the insult of a foreign judicature. The army was to be made the instrument of despotism to violate the liberties of Ireland. The Irish House of Commons had adopted the sentiments of the British Privy Council in contradiction to their own sentiments. Such complaisance was unconstitutional; and therefore they, the Volunteers of Dublin, announced that they would not support the interest or protect the property of any member who had voted with the ministry on the late division; and that they would concur with the Volunteers of the rest of the kingdom in every effort which might tend to avert the dangers with which they were threatened.

A committee was appointed to correspond with the different corps on the measures which it might be necessary to take, and delegates were invited to meet, 'to animate the kingdom to rise in support of the violated rights of Ireland, and the privileges which their treacherous representatives had basely sold to the infamous administration of Great Britain.'

This singular commentary on the political capacity of Ireland's new masters, and on the effects of concessions however just in themselves to Irish agitation, was printed in the *Hibernian Journal*, and as a practical consequence a spirit showed itself of the most ferocious hostility to the British regiments who were quartered in the large towns. Patriot ruffians whose hands were practised in cattle houghing used their knives in slitting the tendons of English soldiers who might be walking carelessly in the streets; and the local juries adopted as their own these detestable atrocities by acquitting the perpetrators when taken in the act.<sup>1</sup> The soldiers, finding justice refused them in the courts, took the remedy into their own hands. In Dublin and Galway there were angry spurts of fighting. In Cashel one of these villains was killed on the spot by the comrade of a man whom he had maimed.

On the members of Parliament, so rapid a development of patriotism, coupled with the insults of September, the Volunteers to themselves, produced for a <sup>1780</sup> time a sobering effect. Already alarmed by the rate at which Grattan was advancing, they were not reassured by the visible breaking loose of Irish devilry. The Supply Bill was passed notwithstanding the outcry on the Sugar duties. Mr. Peter La Touche, who had taken the chair at one of the Volunteer meetings, was called before the Privy Council and apologized. The publications in the *Hibernian Journal* were brought before the

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<sup>1</sup> *MSS. Ireland, 1780.* S.P.O. So far this practice was carried that an Act of Parliament was passed in the following session to repress it.



House of Commons, and the Volunteers' resolutions were condemned as false, scandalous, and libellous, and tending to raise sedition.

Thus were the chequered days of the closing session gilded with a show of loyalty. Lord Hillsborough described the doings of the Volunteers as 'the convulsions of expiring faction;' the Government was soothed into a belief that the worst was over; and business being now completed, the harassed Viceroy had arrived in port, with the one duty left to the House and to himself, to part with mutual congratulations.

'The satisfaction of Ireland at the prospect opening before it might equal,' Lord Buckinghamshire said, 'though it could not exceed, the glow of his private feelings. The commerce of the kingdom was now established on an extended and lasting basis, and future generations would look back to the present Parliament and the diffusive indulgence of his majesty with grateful veneration. The Lords and Commons, when they returned to their counties, would impress on all ranks of men the blessings of the situation, and would invite them to an industry without which the bounties of nature were lavished in vain.'<sup>1</sup>

Platitude could scarcely have been carried further. November, The insincere illusion disappeared before the  
1780 closing speech of the Viceroy was in the columns of the weekly journals. Finding Parliament so unpatriotic as to sacrifice the Sugar duties, the freemen of Dublin met, with the High Sheriff in the chair, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, September 2 1780.

resolved as before that 'non-importation' was more beneficial to them than a nominal free trade. They would, therefore, neither themselves import nor consume, nor would deal with any tradesman who ventured to import, manufactured goods from Great Britain.

King William's statue was the scene of a new demonstration on the 4th of November, not as in the year preceding, with cannon wheeled about <sup>1780</sup> its base and Volunteers parading, but now decorated with saddened emblems—Hibernia weeping over the words Liberty and Commerce, and a scroll expressing a hope 'that the virtuous resistance of America might prove a lesson to the British Ministry.'

To Lord Buckinghamshire the autumn brought indisputable satisfaction. His own inglorious reign came to an end. Before his departure he had to wind up the accounts of his term of office.

It was not by appeals to manly or honourable motives that he had secured the majorities which saved his administration from disgrace and the British army from dissolution. The sublime impulses which had governed the opening months of the session had grown feeble at its close, and the usual detestable list of aspirants for rank or pension was forwarded for the Cabinet's consideration.

'No man,' the Viceroy said, in apology for the numbers whom he was reluctantly obliged to recommend, 'can see the inconveniences of increasing the number of peers more forcibly than myself; but the recommendation of many of the persons submitted to

his majesty for that honour arose from engagements taken up at the press of the moment, to secure questions on which the English Government was very particularly anxious. I feel the same about Privy Council and pensions, and I had not contracted any absolute agreement of recommendations either to peerage or pension till difficulties arose that occasioned so much anxiety in his majesty's Cabinet, that I must have been culpable in neglecting any possible means of securing a majority in the House of Commons.'<sup>1</sup>

The applicants for favours<sup>2</sup> were so abundant that some of them after all were disappointed. The fondness of the Irish for titles was like the fondness of women and savages for feathers and fine clothes, and the refusal was the more bitter because Irish opinion was lenient to the apostate patriot who secured a handsome price for his delinquency, but had no pardon for the dupe who allowed himself to be cheated of his reward.

Viceroy's unable to redeem their engagements were thus liable, in their own persons or their secretaries', to be called to account by these exasperated politicians. A promise given to secure a vote could not be formally pleaded, and was thus treated as a debt of honour. Lord Buckinghamshire had been tempted, in a moment of embarrassment, into a negotiation with Sir Henry

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Buckinghamshire to Lord Hillsborough, November 19, 1780.' will be found in a letter from Lord Buckinghamshire to Lord North. Printed in Grattan's *Life of Grattan*, vol. ii. p. 166, &c.

<sup>2</sup> The names of some of them

Cavendish, a noted free-lance in the House of Commons. Sir Henry had applied for a place on the Privy Council. Lord Buckinghamshire had answered that 'the Privy Council was but a feather;' 'he would do better than that for him;' and when reminded of his words, again promised to provide for his importunate suitor 'before he left the kingdom.' On the faith of these assurances Sir Henry had voted steadily with the Government. Time passed on; the day of Lord Buckinghamshire's departure was approaching, and nothing had been done. Sir Henry wrote to say he would not insult his excellency by the suggestion that he meant to evade his engagement. He appealed to the Viceroy's honour. He reminded him of his exact expressions. 'Had any common prostitute in office made such declarations to him,' he said, 'his experience would have been an antidote to deception, but the word of the Earl of Buckinghamshire he regarded as truth itself.'

To this letter the Viceroy sent no reply. Sir Henry waited till he was on the point of sailing, and then addressed him again in the following words:—

'MY LORD,—On the 22nd of last September I did myself the honour to write to your excellency, but have not had the honour of an answer. I am not conscious of having merited that silent contempt. Your excellency, on perusing my letter, must have perceived that you have deceived and injured me. I earnestly entreat a satisfactory answer whilst your excellency shall

continue in Ireland, that I may not be under the necessity of demanding one on the other side of the water.

‘I am,

‘Your Excellency’s most obedient and  
humble servant,

‘H. CAVENDISH.’

‘To his Excellency  
the Lord-Lieutenant.’

Lord Weymouth, to whom Lord Buckinghamshire forwarded this characteristic communication, submitted it to Wallace, the English Attorney-general, with a view to prosecution. The Attorney-general replied that Sir Henry at worst had been guilty only of a misdemeanour in Ireland, for which he could not be prosecuted in England. In Ireland the scandal of exposure would be certain—a conviction would be extremely uncertain. The matter dropped, and Sir Henry was left in possession of the field with the satisfaction of having at least saved his reputation, though he lost his promised promotion.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CONSTITUTION OF 1782.

## SECTION I.

THE embarrassments of England presented <sup>1780</sup> an opportunity to the maritime nations of Europe too tempting to be resisted. She had affected the sovereignty of the seas. She had asserted a supremacy which galled their pride and irritated their jealousy. Her enemies and her rivals chose the moment of the revolt of the American provinces to humiliate her. It seemed as if the whole world was about to combine to disgrace and ruin the single island which on the map of the globe appears but a small appendage of the continent, divided from it by a thread of water. Spain was snatching at Gibraltar, and France at revenge for her own expulsion from Canada and India. The fame of England's difficulties had reached her Eastern empire, and she was threatened with a rebellion in Hindostan. At this crisis it pleased Catherine of Russia to strike into the quarrel, and to invite the sea powers which were not yet at war to form a league for the protection

of the rights of neutrals—the right among others of supplying England's enemies with munitions of war.

Into this league Holland now entered. Russia confined herself to intrigue. Holland made her possessions in the West Indies a depôt of supplies for the French and Spaniards and Americans. She became as actively mischievous as if she had directly taken part in the conflict; and England, finding remonstrances unheeded, and preferring an open foe to a treacherous neutral, declared war against the Dutch. Thus, without an ally left to her but Portugal, she found herself matched against the three most considerable naval powers of the world next to herself, who each, at one time or another, had encountered her single-handed, and whose combination was rendered doubly dangerous by the support of the American privateers.

That the Protestant colony in Ireland should select this particular moment to threaten a rebellion was not generous on their part, nor particularly glorious; but it was not unnatural, and ought not to have been unexpected. The commercial monopolies were unjust; they had existed so long that their inherent iniquity was no longer perceived. In surrendering them the English had made a sacrifice of pride and interest which, they conceived, entitled them to gratitude; but concessions extorted by agitation have never been followed by gratitude since the world began, and do not in fact deserve it. Under English rule Ireland had been demoralized and made miserable. The Anglo-Irish colonists might naturally suppose that if left to manage their own affairs

they would manage them better. To manage them worse might fairly be thought impossible.

And yet there were circumstances in their past history which, if they had reflected, might have taught them caution. They were aliens, planted by conquest among a people who, though in chains and outwardly submissive, had neither forgotten nor forgiven their subjection. Three times already their ancestors or their predecessors, tempted by analogous wrongs, had turned against the mother country, and had united with the Irish nation in a demand for self-government. On each of these occasions their aspirations had recoiled upon themselves, and the result had been a fresh conquest, with worse miseries attending it than those which they had hoped to escape. The Norman families combined with the Celts to resist the Reformation. Of the descendants of the Normans more than half perished in the wars of Elizabeth, while the Celts, in the horrors of famine, were driven to feed on one another. The Scotch and English Protestants planted by James the First were provoked by Strafford and the bishops into joining with the Irish when England's hands were tied by the quarrel between the King and the Parliament. The result was a furious attempt at their own extermination at the hands of their Irish allies, and they recovered their estates and their homes only when Cromwell and an English army reconquered the island for them. A third time, in another form, the phenomenon repeated itself. In the reaction from Puritan ascendancy the Anglo-Irish nobles and gentry became violent Jacobites



and High Churchmen. They preferred the Catholic Celts to the Presbyterian Scots, and by playing into the Catholics' hands enabled Tyrconnell to establish a Catholic Government. When the Celts were once more in the saddle they found themselves involved in the common proscription which refused to make distinctions among Protestants. A third time England was reluctantly driven to interfere in their behalf, and replace the supremacy in their hands. She beat the Celts upon their knees, and flung them into chains; but disgusted with the ungrateful service, she threw Celt and colonist alike under disabilities which would prevent them from giving further trouble, and left the country to its fate. This, too, was not to answer to England. Strong nations trusted with empire over their weaker neighbours are not allowed to leave their duties undone. Anarchy and wretchedness had again produced mutiny and discontent, and the Protestant colonists were once more dreaming of separation and a revival of Irish nationality.

The question what that nationality was to be they scarcely cared in their present heat to consider: but that it was a very serious question was obvious to all but themselves. Were some half million Protestants—for the Established Church contained no more, and Churchmen so far monopolized power and privilege—were half a million Protestants to remain a Spartan aristocracy, surrounded by a population of helots six times outnumbering them, whose lands they had occupied?

Lord Charlemont and many another enthusiastic

patriot saw no difficulty in this. He would perhaps have levelled the distinction between Churchman and Nonconformist Protestant. The Catholics—though he was in favour of extending their civil rights to the utmost—Charlemont never dreamt of admitting to political power, and believed it would be possible to keep them excluded.

Grattan, farther sighted than Charlemont, saw early that an Irish nationality, from which the Irish themselves were shut out, was a paradox and an absurdity. Experience of the ductile character of the existing Parliament showed him that, while its composition was unchanged, self-government would be no more than a name. He persuaded himself that distinction of religion was worn out, that animosities of race could be extinguished in a common enthusiasm, that Celt and Saxon might stand side by side in the ranks, and present a common front to the British oppressor. Like other eager statesmen, he regarded the lessons of the past as no longer applicable. If it was hinted that when the Celt had his foot within the Constitution, when he saw the usurpers of his estates and the oppressors of his creed at the mercy of his superior numbers, he might revive the aspirations of 1690, Grattan replied only with disdain or with misleading metaphors. The Celts, as he saw them, were spiritless and broken, the peasantry cringing before the Protestant squires, or, when they were kindly dealt with, loyal and affectionate. He saw the Catholic clergy in appearance humbly grateful for the suspension of laws which if executed would have

forbidden them to exist. That in such a people as this, there would be danger to the Protestant gentry, who, besides other advantages, had now their own army of volunteers, was an idea too preposterous to be entertained. 'Are we,' he asked, 'to be a Protestant settlement or an Irish nation?' and in his answer to his question he exposed the measure of his foresight.

'The Penal Code,' he said, 'is the shell in which Protestant power has been hatched. It has become a bird. It must burst the shell or perish in it. Indulgence to Catholics cannot injure the Protestant religion. That religion is the religion of the State, and will become the religion of Catholics if severity does not prevent them.'

Piece by piece the shell has been broken off. Has the Protestant bird developed power of wing in consequence? Do the Catholics seem any more to admire it? Let us look for answer in the Disestablished Church, in the obliteration of the Protestants in Ireland as a political power in the country, in the reduction of the Viceroy into a registrar of the decrees of the Vatican, and the boast of a cardinal that Irish nationality is the Catholic religion.

Mr. Grattan was dazzled by his own brilliancy. He believed, or he affected to believe, that liberty, like the spell of an enchanter, could form a Legislature of pure and high-minded statesmen out of the Peers and Commons, with whose motives of action he was by this time familiar; and that out of the discordant and motley elements which formed the population of Ireland he

could create a united, noble, and self-reliant people. If, besides these high flights of imagination, any more earthly and practical thoughts presented themselves, he may have believed that the day of England's greatness was over, that her star was setting, and for ever, and that his free Ireland might find an ally less dangerous to her liberties and equally convenient for her protection either in France or in her sister colony across the Atlantic.

## SECTION II.

So far as the realization of the hopes of the Irish patriots depended on the progress of the war, 1780 the events of the year 1780 were on the whole unfavourable to them. Though the Irish Channel was the hunting-ground of privateers, and bishops' daughters were captured and held to ransom between Waterford and Milford, England still presented an unbroken front to her many enemies. The Spaniards had blockaded Gibraltar in the belief that they would starve out the garrison. Sir George Rodney, with a relieving fleet, seized a convoy of Spanish provision-ships in the spring, and fed General Elliot and his troops out of the stores of the enemy. In July he encountered the Spanish Admiral Don Juan de Langara at Cape St. Vincent, destroyed seven out of eleven of his ships, and carried Don Juan himself a prisoner into the blockaded fortress.

Nor had the alliance with France brought that immediate triumph to the American provinces which sanguine patriots anticipated. M. de Ternay arrived at Rhode Island in July with fifteen ships of the line, bringing with him the Count de Rochambeau and six thousand men as the vanguard of a larger force which was to follow. France was preparing to put out her utmost strength, yet M. de Ternay let Admiral Arbuth

not blockade him with an inferior fleet, and the French contingent lay locked-up and useless.

The capture of Charleston had been followed by the complete submission of the Carolinas. Sir Henry Clinton held New York in strength, against which Washington could do nothing; and the unexpected protraction of the war, which had seemed as good as ended, brought despondency and mutiny into the American camp. General Arnold, who had headed the expedition into Canada, the most distinguished after Washington of the patriot commanders, believed the cause to be lost. He opened a correspondence with Clinton, proposed to betray West Point to him, and with West Point the control of the Hudson. The plot was discovered. Arnold escaped into the English lines. Major André, Clinton's aide-de-camp, through whom the negotiation was carried on, was taken and hanged. But the disappointment did not materially alter the prospects of the contending parties. Arnold published a defence of his desertion, in which he pretended that England by her concessions had removed the occasion of the quarrel, and that under no circumstances would he be a party to the French alliance or assist in betraying the mother country to her hereditary enemy. Having returned to his allegiance, he took active service under Clinton, and led an expeditionary force into Virginia, which at first carried all before it. In January, 1781, the American army almost dissolved for want of pay, <sup>1781</sup> and but for the timely arrival of a subsidy from France, would have been unable to offer opposition in the field

in any part of the Continent to the British divisions. The supply of money gave new spirit to the cause. Washington re-equipped his troops. La Fayette went down to Virginia with part of the French army to oppose Arnold. De Ternay broke the blockade, and made his way to the Chesapeake with the rest, intending to co-operate. Still the balance wavered. Arbuthnot pursued him and fought an action which, though indecisive, disabled him from proceeding. The French fleet returned to Rhode Island, General Phillips carried reinforcements to Arnold, and in March, 1781, Washington's own State, notwithstanding La Fayette, remained in possession of the British.

The Dutch, too, were paying dear for having thrust themselves into a quarrel which was none of theirs. No sooner was war declared against them than Rodney seized St. Eustatius, the most important of their West India islands, where they had accumulated enormous stores for shipment to America. Ships, factories, warehouses, all were taken. Three millions' worth of property was captured or destroyed.

From India, too, came cheering news. Sir Eyre Coote twice defeated Hyder Ali. Warren Hastings was triumphing in spite of France and Mysore, and passionate philanthropists at home.

The French, finding the work less easy than they expected, began to hint at peace; and it was felt painfully by all parties that unless some combined and vigorous effort could be made, and made at once, Saratoga would be a barren triumph, and Bunker's Hill and

Lexington would have been fought in vain. England, too, was strained to the utmost of her power. Lord George Germaine, her Minister at War, was incompetent beyond the average of Parliamentary administrators. The waste had been enormous. The national debt was piling up into a mountain, and the simultaneous requirements of India, Gibraltar, and the Navy, rendered it a hard task to keep Clinton properly reinforced. One more attempt should be made, at any rate. In the summer of 1780 the united French and Spanish fleets—thirty-six sail of the line in all—had sailed for the West Indies, with a view of taking Jamaica, and then of attacking Clinton at New York. Heat and overcrowding had brought disease. They returned, having done nothing. In 1781 the two fleets sailed again under Count de Grasse. Jamaica, as before, was to be their first object; but, whether successful at Jamaica or not, de Grasse was to assist Washington and De Rochambeau in a grand attack by sea and land upon New York. If the attack was successful, it would conclude the war. If it failed, France would probably have declined to pursue the adventure further, and fortune this time was more favourable than the most sanguine hopes could have anticipated.

Lord Cornwallis, who had served in America from the beginning of the war, still commanded in the Carolinas, which he was endeavouring to bring to formal submission. The Americans, unable since the defeat at Camden to meet the British in the field, were able to harass their marches, surprise isolated detachments, and



maintain a spirited if irregular resistance. Cornwallis found himself unable, with all his exertions, to restore a regular government, or unite the loyal part of the inhabitants of those states. The defeat of General Tarleton at Cow Pens was none the less a serious blow that it was due to carelessness and over-confidence. The small number of troops engaged on both sides were lost in the enormous territory for which they were contending, and the soldiers wasted away in profitless marches and malaria. Finding it necessary to attempt something more effective, the English General determined, though with no very definite object, on a bold adventure. He proposed to establish a communication with Arnold in Virginia, and place a line of military posts between Charleston and Petersburg. He took the field at the beginning of March, 1781, with some misgiving, but on the whole sanguine. He inflicted a severe defeat on General Greene on the 15th at Guildford, and leaving Lord Rawdon<sup>1</sup> to keep order in South Carolina, he moved on himself to Wilmington. American armies recovered quickly from their losses. Greene doubled back in his rear, and though again defeated on the 19th of April, forced Rawdon afterwards into Charleston, and picked up the detachments which Cornwallis had left to keep open his communications. As Burgoyne had been cut off from Lake Champlain, so Cornwallis was now separated from his base of supplies in South Carolina, and was forced to push forward with his best speed into Virginia. He reached Petersburg

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<sup>1</sup> Earl of Moira afterwards

on the 20th of May, where he found Arnold. Clinton had sent him 1500 men from New York, which raised his entire numbers to 7000. He was more than a match in the field for any power which La Fayette could then bring against him; and as long as the sea was open and the English were masters of it, he was in no danger of a want of supplies. But he confessed himself 'totally in the dark' as to what he was generally to do; he was 'weary of marching about the country in quest of adventure,'<sup>1</sup> and was anxious for orders from New York. 'Orders' were what Clinton was just then unable to give; he had just heard that de Grasse had sailed, and that he was himself in danger of being attacked by sea and land. He had not another man to spare; he therefore recommended Cornwallis to occupy some strong position on the coast, where he would be within reach, and hold himself ready to embark for New York. Such vague directions were not of happy omen. Cornwallis, however, obeyed, and entrenched himself at Yorktown, in Virginia, where the York river runs into the Chesapeake, waiting for the arrival of a promised English squadron.

No English General can believe himself in danger when he is touching the sea. For once, through a combination of accidents, England was found wanting in her own peculiar domain. The English squadron never reached the Chesapeake, but de Grasse and the French and Spaniards came instead of it. Rodney had

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, April 10, 1780.'—*Cornwallis Despatches*, vol. i. p. 87.

gone to England with the spoils of St. Eustatius, and had not returned to his station. De Grasse, when he arrived with the combined fleet of France and Spain, found himself stronger than any force which England could at that moment bring into line on the American coast. Admiral Graves came down with the ships lying at New York, and with a far inferior force ventured an engagement. He was not defeated, but he suffered heavily, and was obliged to draw off, while de Grasse closed the mouth of the net in which Cornwallis was by this time enclosed.<sup>1</sup>

Washington, joined by the French at Rhode Island, instead of attacking New York, had pushed down by forced marches into Virginia. Escape by sea was impossible. There were a few days in which, before the lines of investment were drawn close about him, Cornwallis might have at least attempted to escape the fate impending on him. Before Washington arrived on the scene he was still superior to La Fayette. By an instant and rapid movement he might have broken through, perhaps have effected a retreat to Carolina, or even with exceptional daring have cut his way by land through Pennsylvania. But Cornwallis, though a brave and solid general, was without the qualities of genius which are needed for sudden emergencies. Half his men had sickened from the unhealthy vapours of the York river, and if he moved he must have left his sick behind him. Clinton misled him by cheering messages that help might be looked for, and he continued to wait

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<sup>1</sup> August 20.

for its coming till Washington had drawn his lines across the neck of the Peninsula on which the British were lying, and with 10,000 Americans and 7000 French completed the blockade. Under these conditions Lord Cornwallis did what might have been expected from an honourable man of sense and integrity. He held his ground till the enemies' trenches had been pushed close, and their cannon searched every corner of the British encampment. When further resistance was impossible, and the result of prolonging the struggle could have been only a useless sacrifice of brave men's lives, the American war was brought on the 19th of October to its virtual close, by the second surrender of an English General and an English army.

## SECTION III.

THE Earl of Carlisle and Mr. Eden,<sup>1</sup> the unsuccessful  
 1781 commissioners to America, were selected to suc-  
 ceed Lord Buckinghamshire and Sir R. Heron, as  
 Viceroy and Secretary at Dublin Castle. Four years of  
 such ungrateful service tried the patience of the most  
 enduring public servants, each Viceroy finding the post  
 more difficult, and the shifts more detestable, by which  
 alone the Government could be carried on. After Lord  
 Buckinghamshire's departure the Volunteers, who now  
 looked on themselves as the real rulers of the country,  
 chose a second Legislature of their own. They passed  
 resolutions condemning the House of Commons. They  
 clamoured against the refusal of the sugar duties. They  
 saw in the Perpetual Mutiny Bill a base surrender of  
 the liberties of Ireland. The language in which they  
 expressed their views was of the choicest Hibernian  
 type, and the patriotic newspapers which reported their  
 proceedings were filling their columns with outpourings  
 of mere treason. Prosecutions were talked of; but the  
 Leinster corps interspersing their politics with reviews  
 and displays of force, prudence was stronger than valour.

The aristocracy, many of whom had taken a lead at  
 the beginning of the movement, were frightened at the  
 power which they had created. 'Wild notions of

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Auckland.

Republicanism' were abroad—borrowed from America; vague ideas of rights of man, not yet thrown into shape by Tom Paine, but seething and fermenting in the Presbyterian blood in the north. Lord Carlisle, after a month's experience, reported a conviction growing 'among a variety of men of the greatest weight in the kingdom,' 'that for their own security they must support the English Government,' that 'the power must be regained from the people which, if it remained in their hands, would be the ruin of the State.'<sup>1</sup> Concession which was to have made Ireland eternally loyal, had resulted in 'the obliteration of respect essential to Government from the minds of the people.' Free trade was to have been 'a horn of plenty.' It occurred to no one that trade could not grow, like a mushroom, in a night. The expected plenty was still absent, and the people 'were taught to believe' that it was still British legislation which forbade the fountain to flow.<sup>2</sup> 'The men of the greatest weight,' too, though they feared what was coming and wished Government to exert itself, did not care to compromise themselves by public action. In revolutions the centre of gravity changes. The privileged orders feel dimly that their consequence is passing from them. They are in the presence of forces which they do not understand and fear to encounter. Lord Carlisle complained that 'the higher classes stood aloof from him;' while discontent grew louder, and the

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, January 29, 1781.' | <sup>2</sup> 'To Lord Hillsborough, March 29, 1782.' A retrospective letter.  
S. P. O.

Volunteers, more and more disdaining disguise, spoke of themselves as the defenders of the country 'against foreign and domestic enemies'—the domestic enemy 'being the Parliament of Great Britain and the supporters of the Government in Ireland.'<sup>1</sup>

If this state of things was scarcely tolerable in the recess, it would necessarily be infinitely worse when the period arrived for the Irish Legislature to re-assemble. Repeal of Poyning's Act, repeal of the 6th of George the First, a bill of rights, and none could say how many more such bills, were preparing in Grattan's laboratory, and would have to be met in the midst of a universal hubbub, under the muskets of the Volunteers, now said to number a hundred thousand. Hillsborough, when the Viceroy consulted him, advised a free use of 'secret service money.' But where in Ireland did a subterranean Pactolus flow? Lord Carlisle, or Mr. Eden for him, replied in sorrow, 'that he could take no money from the Irish treasury without accounting for it.' Ireland having no foreign relations 'he had no constitutional pretext of foreign service;' 'and the mischief,' he pathetically said, 'which had long resulted from this was not to be described.' 'In the present state of the country the wise application of 3000*l.* a year might be of a degree of importance to his majesty's affairs beyond what words could estimate.' There was in fact but one resource. He must be supplied from England. 'Lord Carlisle must be permitted to draw on Mr. Robinson for sums to be applied to his majesty's service and the

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord Hillsborough, March 29, 1782.' A retrospective letter.

effective conduct of Government : Lord North, in return, might expect an ample compensation to his majesty by grant or pension from Ireland at a proper time to such persons as his majesty would otherwise provide for from his English revenue.' <sup>1</sup>

As the summer advanced the aspect grew steadily darker. Every ship that England could spare from her home defences was in the West Indies or at New York, or relieving Gibraltar, or watching the Dutch. Ireland, so anxious to relieve England of her internal garrison, provided no volunteers upon the water. The mouth of Waterford Harbour was held by a fleet of privateers, who lay undisturbed there, preying upon the passing vessels. When it was rumoured that the French meant to send an expedition against Cork, a few volunteers offered their services. The offer, it will be seen, came to nothing, though the Government received it as well meant, and as indicating feelings not utterly disloyal.

By September the patriots had laid out the plan of their campaign. An attack was to be made on Poynings' Act ; the biennial clause was to be re-<sup>1781</sup> stored to the Mutiny Bill ; and to counterbalance the declaratory Act of the 6th of George the First, Mr. Grattan meant to move a Declaration of Parliamentary Independence. On Poynings' Act and the Mutiny Bill Lord Carlisle

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<sup>1</sup> 'In short, my dear lord,' this singular letter concluded, 'this matter is of extreme moment ; but if Lord North, whose dispositions towards us, both officially and personally, are not unkind, does not fully feel its importance, we have only to meet this difficulty with others, and go on as we can.'—'Mr. Eden to Lord Hillsborough, July 15, 1781. Most secret.'



felt comparatively easy. The temper of the House had been tried on both subjects in the last session, with satisfactory results; but the Declaration of Independence had a charm for the ears of Irishmen which made the Constitution on this side far more vulnerable; and he saw that his utmost efforts would be necessary if it was to be successfully resisted. Whether Eden received the powers which he desired of drawing on the English exchequer is uncertain. Other points, however, were looked for on which popular prejudices might be humoured. The sugar duty question would certainly be revived. If the Irish consumer wished to pay an extra price for his sugar to benefit his country's trade, Lord Carlisle thought he might be indulged. A vote of thanks might be given graciously to the Volunteers; and his hands would be strengthened, he said, if he might consent at last to the change in the judges' tenure. There was no modern instance of a judge's dismissal, and it was hard to assign a producible reason for placing the Irish bench in a different position from that of their brethren in England.<sup>1</sup>

To these suggestions the Cabinet had but one answer. With enemies on all sides of them, they stood to their old policy of uncompromising resistance. It was a matter of course that the Viceroy should be instructed to oppose constitutional changes, to resist a Declaration of Independence, to resist attacks on the securities for the good behaviour of the Irish Parlia-

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Weymouth, September 15. Most secret.'

ment. But the small acts of grace which Lord Carlisle recommended to soothe and satisfy the minds of moderate men were, it seemed, equally distasteful. The Volunteers might be thanked if it were insisted on, but there were to be no taxes on manufactured sugar; and 'as to giving the Irish judges the same position which the judges had in England,' 'the King's servants had to observe that nothing could be more dangerous and improper than such an act, without the clauses which were inserted by the Privy Council in the former bill, on which it was thrown out by the House of Commons in Ireland.'<sup>1</sup>

The Viceroy was thus thrown on his own resources to meet the storm, of which the sounds of the approach were every moment becoming more 1781 audible. The Volunteers had continued their reviews through the summer into the autumn, to the infinite satisfaction of admiring Ireland. The Ulster corps, with Lord Charlemont at their head, paraded at Belfast in the presence of 6000 spectators. The officers presented an address to the commander-in-chief, and Charlemont replied with corresponding flattery.

'I behold,' he said, 'a powerful army, self-raised, self-clothed, self-paid; disciplined by its own efforts, so that the most experienced veteran must admire. I behold my country, fearless of invasion, formidable to her enemies, respected by her sister kingdom, an object of veneration to all Europe; constitutional freedom emerging from the dark abyss into which she had been

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Carlisle, September, 1781.'

plunged by folly and corruption, lawless and absurd oppression.'

Whether Ireland was really at that moment the object of veneration which she supposed, it would be discourteous to enquire too 'curiously. That the veneration, if it existed, would not have survived a trial of the Volunteers in the field, may be asserted with more certainty. When the Government accepted their offer to defend Cork, three hundred men were all that came forward. They had courage in plenty, and, no doubt, goodwill; but 'scarcely a corps had any camp equipage,' or could be moved for more than two days out of reach of their homes. They were totally unprovided with everything necessary to soldiers beyond a uniform and a musket. Not one of their officers 'would accept a commission from the Crown or subject himself to the Articles of War;' and when their strength was at its highest the Duke of Portland gave it as his deliberate opinion that, unless they were assisted by an English division, 'five thousand regular troops, who could effect a landing, would remain masters of whatever port they might choose to occupy,' for all the resistance they would meet with from the Volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, if not dangerous to the enemy, they were a formidable element of possible internal mischief, and Lord Carlisle was justified in regarding the prospect before him with serious apprehension.

The opening of the session which was big with the fate

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Portland to Thomas Townshend, July 18, 1782.'  
S. P. O.

of Ireland at length arrived. It was the 9th of October, ten days before the catastrophe at York Town.

In default of money, or any substantial act of <sup>1781</sup> grace which might have served instead of it, Mr. Eden had been lavish of promises to be fulfilled after good behaviour, when the campaign should be over. He stood in need, as he well knew, of all the friendship that he could make. The Irish debt, for one thing, was now nearly three millions, the annual deficit more than a quarter of a million, and trade still refusing to rise, of course through the invidious machinations of ever-guilty England.

The speech was studiously humble, Lord Carlisle seeming as if he was awed by the crowd which filled every corner of the galleries. His majesty was said to be filled with the warmest wishes for Ireland's happiness, and in consideration for her sufferings would, notwithstanding the war, make no extraordinary demands upon her. Towards the Volunteers the Viceroy forced himself into expressions of gratitude and an admiration neither of which it was possible for him to feel.

The address was moved by Mr. O'Neil, who coupled with it the expected proposal for the thanks of the House to the Volunteers. After the Viceroy's fulsome language, opposition on this account was expected from no one. It appeared, however, that among the members present there was one at least who would neither speak any untrue word himself, nor would listen in silence to the insincerity of others. Thirteen months only had passed since in that House the resolutions of

these same Volunteers had been condemned as false, scandalous, and libellous; since the editor of the *Hibernian Journal* had been rebuked for publishing them, and La Touche, the chairman of the Volunteer meeting, had been obliged to apologize.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, member now for the University of Dublin, being without the admiration professed by others for the singular body who had taken on themselves to dictate to Parliament, moved that, before the thanks were voted to the Volunteers, the censures should be read which the House had passed on them at the close of the last session.

Had a spectre appeared on the floor, the members could not have been more startled. On all sides they sprung to their feet to clamour down so inconvenient a proposal. Tom Conolly, who had been the mover of the censure, deprecated the revival of it. The Attorney-general professed his high respect 'for a virtuous armed people.' The scandal was hushed up in the enthusiasm while the vote was passed, and men tried to forget that it had happened. None the less Fitzgibbon, in that daring action, had shown friend and foe the metal of which he was made. He, for himself, had declared war against insolent anarchy and factious imposture, and had struck his first blow.

Pandora's box was now opened. Bradstreet, the Recorder of Dublin, came first with a Habeas Corpus Act, and a motion for a committee to enquire into the state of the kingdom. Yelverton followed with a notice that he would bring in a bill to take from the Council,

English and Irish, the powers which they exercised under Poyning's Act to alter bills of the Irish Parliament. Then Grattan came to fulfil his threat of the preceding year, and gave notice that he would move to repeal the Mutiny Bill.

The debates had become interesting to the public. The galleries were crammed with eager listeners, who occasionally joined in the discussions. On the first of November there was an exchange of courtesies between the audience and the members on Bradstreet's Habeas Corpus Act. The audience were dissatisfied at the tone of the speeches. The members shouted 'Order' from the floor, and called the strangers in the galleries ruffians.

Floor and galleries were only amusing themselves before the chief performers appeared on the stage. Another actor besides Fitzgibbon was to play an important part there. Mr. Grattan had assumed the place which his achievements in the past year seemed to have won for him as leader of the Opposition. He found, when he began to bring in his measures, that another claimant for public favour was disputing pre-eminence with him. Ten years before, Mr. Flood had been what Grattan then was—the proud antagonist of English influence, the all-adored declaimer on the rights and the oppressions of Ireland. His eloquence and his influence had purchased for him the ordinary rewards of successful agitation. He had obtained the most lucrative office at the disposition of the Castle, with the immensely-coveted seat in the Privy Council; and

having achieved the highest objects of an Irish politician's ambition, his career as a patriot was assumed to be over. His services thenceforward, except in extraordinary cases, had been secured to the Crown.

The agitation with which he had played had unexpectedly changed its character. From being  
November, 1781 a mere avenue to public employment it had become a national power, threatening to change the face of the Constitution; and unable to endure to see the place once so brilliantly occupied by himself snatched from him by a younger rival, impatient to hear another's name shouted by the million voices which had once rung with his own, while his mind was still in its maturity, and his power unimpaired, Mr. Flood believed that he could recover his lost position, and a second time become the champion of Irish liberty. In the debates of 1780 he had shown signs that he was restless in his chains. The growth of the movement in the interval had determined him to break them. On the first occasion which offered, when Grattan brought up the Mutiny Bill, he rushed to the front, and in the old style poured out a stream of declamation on the profligacy of the Castle expenditure, by which he had himself condescended to profit.

The returned prodigal was not very warmly received. George Ponsonby congratulated him on the recovery of his voice, after seven years of silence, and hinting sarcastically at the probable consequences, applauded the public spirit which made him risk the loss of the best appointment which the Government had to bestow. His

friends exclaimed at the enormity of the supposition that he should lose his office for obeying his conscience. If he shared their feelings and believed that the Government would not dare to punish him, he calculated too much upon the King's cowardice. He had tried the patience of the Cabinet already, when he boasted that the Vice-Treasurership had been the unsolicited gift of his sovereign. His sovereign remembered too accurately the history of that transaction, and showed his sense of Mr. Flood's conduct by striking his name with his own hand from the list of Privy Councillors. Mr. Flood only escaped deprivation of the office, for which he had sued so ardently, by immediate voluntary resignation. The coolness of his reception by the patriots, and the prompt action of the Crown, stimulated him to more violent efforts.

When Grattan's motion on the Mutiny Bill came to a division on the 13th of November, it was lost by a large majority. Mr. Flood desired to show that <sup>1781</sup> an experienced general could succeed where his younger rival had failed, and revived it under another form. The opportunity selected for these attacks on the British army was ungracious and unfortunate. At the moment when the Irish popular leaders were clamouring for measures which destroyed the discipline and threatened the existence of the scanty regiments which formed, nevertheless, the sole effective defence of Ireland against invasion; when the cattle-houghers, encouraged by parliamentary rhetoric, were hamstringing British soldiers who were straying carelessly in the provincial



towns, the poor army of which they formed a part, in another quarter of the world, was crowning itself with immortal glory. For a year past a never intermitting storm of shot and shell had rained into Gibraltar. The houses in the town were all destroyed. The inhabitants, gentle and simple, were crowded in the casemates. Enormous works had been thrown up at the neck of the Peninsula by the most accomplished engineers which the allied nations could produce; and from behind those works, and under a fire before which no living thing could show itself and escape destruction, the choicest troops of France and Spain were to advance and drive the English into the sea. All was ready for the attack. Ten thousand tons of powder had been distributed among the magazines. On one of those very same November nights when Grattan was wreathing his brow with an aureole and Flood was fighting for the recovery of his patriotic laurels, General Ross stole out<sup>1</sup> in the darkness with two thousand men, stormed into the Spanish lines, swept the trenches, overthrew the palisades, and laying trains into the magazines, sent the results of twelve months' toil and the passionate hopes of England's enemies, with one wild roar into the air.

It was not the Irish Volunteers just then which Europe was admiring, as Lord Charlemont supposed, but the British defence of the barren rock which stands sentinel at the gates of the Mediterranean. Mr. Flood's spirited endeavours, at that instant at least, were not

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<sup>1</sup> November 27.

allowed to succeed. To his extreme mortification, he failed more decisively than Grattan had failed. The patriot phalanx declined to follow his call. He was defeated by 146 to 66.

The Attorney-general improved the occasion. He observed with delicate irony that Mr. Flood's situation reminded him of a parish clerk whom <sup>1781</sup> he had known when he was at the Temple, going by the name of Harry Plantagenet.<sup>1</sup> Harry had acquired his soubriquet as a king of sportsmen. When the hounds were at fault, no whip was so skilful as Harry in bringing them back to the trail. They followed no voice so readily as Harry's. The huntsman, seeing his influence over the dogs, took him into employment and dressed him in the royal uniform. In this situation his zeal languished, he became lazy and self-indulgent. Younger men outrode him and took his place in the favour both of dogs and field. He became jealous; he quarrelled with his masters. He went back to hunt in opposition, but he found now that the spell was broken, that not a hound would obey him, not a rider would follow him, and he returned to the Temple Church to sing psalms and care for his soul.

The story was told with a dramatic humour which sparkled the more brilliantly the more the House showed its enjoyment. The arrow hung by the barb in Flood's side. In vain he tried to shake it from him, and capered like the bull in the arena when the *chulos* plant the *banderilla* in his shoulders.

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<sup>1</sup> Flood's name was Henry.

The Irish gentry, for a time at least, were showing a nobler spirit than their chosen champions.

Yelverton had given notice that on the 5th of December he would move for the consideration of Poyning's Act. Before the day came the news arrived of Lord Cornwallis's surrender. Struck at once with the unfitness of pressing a hostile motion at such a crisis, he proposed in place of it an address to the Crown of simple and unaffected good feeling. He said, 'it would ill become the loyalty of Ireland to remain in apathy, when Britain, surrounded with enemies, was struggling against a warring world, with the admiration of every generous mind.' He was not expressing the sentiments either of the mob out of doors, or of Grattan, the representative of the mob in Parliament. The Irish, generally, could not be expected to feel regret at the disasters of their oppressors. Grattan stormed at Yelverton's weakness, and declared that Ireland would be mad if she exerted herself to save England from misfortune. The House was of a different opinion. The address of sympathy was carried by a very large majority.<sup>1</sup>

The division showed Grattan that the Castle was stronger than he had hoped. So far he had made no progress in a campaign where he had looked for immediate victory. He assumed that his defeat was owing (as perhaps in part it was) to the usual debasing influences. He repeated the language of the Volunteers, and openly accused the Viceroy of spending the

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<sup>1</sup> 167 to 37.

Irish revenue in corrupting the conscience of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Flood, snatching at any instrument which would give him back his place in the people's hearts, took up the subject which Yelverton had not dropped, but had laid aside for a fortnight out of good feeling. Yelverton's motion was to come on again on the 18th. Flood dragged it forward in an altered shape December, on the 11th, and moved for a committee to 1781 consider the conditions under which heads of bills were certified with England. His cause was good. It has been seen in many instances how mischievously the Privy Council both in England and Ireland abused their powers to defeat good measures or forward bad ones. Mr. Flood explained with correctness that the modern practice was never contemplated when the Act on which it was based became law. Sir Edward Poyning's Act had been passed when the communication between the two countries was slow and difficult, and the object of it had been to prevent the Viceroy of Ireland from giving the Royal assent on their own responsibility to measures of which England disapproved. By the ingenuity of James the First the Irish Council had been shaped after the pattern of the Scotch Lords of Articles; and following that example they had been allowed to remodel, and even originate, heads of bills

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<sup>1</sup> 'As to the appropriation of the money, I am ashamed to state it. Let the minister defend it. Let him defend the scandal of giving pensions, directly or indirectly, to the first of the nobility. Let him defend the minute corruption which, in small bribes and annuities, leaves honourable gentlemen poor while it makes them dependent.'—*Irish Debates*, December 7, 1781.

which were the property of Parliament. He spoke eloquently, as he always did. The House was, in principle, on his side, for there was scarcely a single member—not even Fitzgibbon—who did not desire to see the powers of the Council modified;<sup>1</sup> but they resented Flood's taking the question out of Yelverton's hands, and he was beaten almost as severely as before.

Flood being pushed aside, not without loud complaints, Yelverton resumed charge of his own bill, the effect of which, if carried, would be to place the Irish Parliament in the same position as the English. The Irish Parliament was to frame its own measures as pleased itself. The Crown was to be left with a veto as the constitutional symbol of sovereignty. The 6th of George the First had been mentioned repeatedly in the debate. The sentiment of the House was distinct that the English Parliament had nothing to do with Ireland, and could pass no laws affecting it. At a calmer time many questions would have suggested themselves on the relations in which the two countries would stand towards one another, and in which Ireland would stand towards the Executive Government, if the tie between them was reduced to the person of the sovereign. What was to happen if on points of public policy or general commerce the two Legislatures should be in collision?—if the Crown should withhold its con-

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<sup>1</sup> Hely Hutchinson was an exception. He had no belief in an independent regenerated Irish Parliament. He looked for reform in another direction, and quoted Pope's

too little remembered lines :—	‘For modes of Government let
	fools contest ;
	Whate'er is best administered is
	best.’

sent from a measure desired in Ireland, but disapproved in England? Ireland's ambition was, in fact, to defy the laws of gravity; bring the inferior country to be regarded and treated as an equal, and her slightest trade being dependent on the protection of the English navy, to be allowed to regulate the details of it after her own pleasure. Another more vital difficulty there was too, such as had already occurred after the Revolution, when there was a King *de facto* on the throne, and a Pretender aspiring to it! Was the English Parliament to decide who was to be Ireland's sovereign; and if they differed in opinion, who was to judge between them?

These objections could scarcely have escaped discussion had the temper of the time permitted; but enthusiasm will not believe in obstacles to the gratification of its hopes. The heads of Yelverton's bill were brought in and passed for transmission; and the heads of another bill were passed also, which being practical, was of more real importance. The concessions made in the last session to the Catholics were then supposed to be final, but the first removal of painful restrictions makes those which remain the more irksome. The principle has been abandoned, the outworks of the fortress have been carried; and, as a matter of course, the attack is continued while anything is left to be done. Luke Gardiner, who had charge of the bill of 1780, now introduced a second. As the law stood the Catholics could take leases for 999 years; they could not yet acquire freeholds. Gardiner said his object was to raise the Catholics of Ireland to the same position in which they

were now placed in England, and allow them to purchase, inherit, and hold property on the same terms as  
1781 other subjects. When favours were asked for the Catholics, the English Government always responded. More than ever were the Catholics now valuable to them as a counterpoise to the Volunteers. The Cabinet, looking only to the present moment, had no doubts of the policy of concession. Opinions in Ireland, even in the patriot camp, were divided. Grattan, whose dream was of a revived nationality, declared that Ireland would never prosper till its inhabitants were 'a people.' Charlemont was hostile. Flood, either from conviction or antagonism to Grattan, was prepared to resist to the utmost, on Protestant principles. On the first discussion on the introduction of the heads, Fitzgibbon was the most rational speaker. He admitted that the penal laws were an anachronism. He believed, as most intelligent men in Europe then believed, that Romanism had ceased to be dangerous as a political power. Toleration, he said, had become the rule of the world, and Ireland must not be left behind. The Irish Catholics had earned a restoration of their rights by their patience under protracted disabilities. He advised only that the degree of concession intended should be carefully considered; that what was to be done should be done completely, and that the subject should be finally disposed of. Leave was then given. The heads were introduced, to be debated after the Christmas recess. The supplies were voted. Yelverton's bill was sent to England for approval. Complimentary addresses were exchanged

between the Viceroy and the Speaker, and the House separated till the 29th of January. The first part of the session had belied Lord Carlisle's fears. With judicious management, and with the help, perhaps, of the Catholic Relief Bill, the remainder of it he hoped might be got over, if not with brilliancy, yet without misfortune. Though some constitutional changes might be necessary, they might be kept within limits. Grattan's following was evidently weak, and Flood carried no one with him but a handful of personal admirers.



## SECTION IV.

ON the re-assembling of Parliament the first subject  
 Feb. which came on for consideration in the House  
 1782 of Commons was the Catholic Relief Bill. The  
 disagreement in the popular party and the objections  
 of the more serious politicians had become wider and  
 deeper by reflection.

Hely Hutchinson, who always spoke to the purpose,  
 deprecated hasty legislation on a ticklish subject.  
 Feb. 5 He was opposed on principle to the continuance  
 of penalties on conscience, but he thought that the  
 re-introduction of the Catholics as a power in the State  
 was beginning at the wrong end. He was in favour of  
 the recognition and payment of the Catholic clergy by  
 the State. He recommended the institution of a college  
 for their home education, where they would escape  
 the influences to which they were exposed in France  
 and Spain.

On the 15th, when the Bill came to be committed,  
 Fitzgibbon spoke. He said that till that morning he  
 had seen no danger in Mr. Gardiner's proposal, but on  
 reading the Bill carefully he had discovered that, in the  
 shape in which it was offered to the House, the first  
 clause touched the Act of Forfeiture; it would thus  
 affect the titles on which four-fifths of Irish land was  
 held, and would throw the entire country into confusion.

Of course there was a panic, which was not diminished by the praises bestowed by the Government speakers on the good humour with which the Catholics had endured their afflictions.

The Attorney-general said that 'he had seen at Monaghan at the same moment three large congregations flowing simultaneously out of a meeting-house, a church, and a mass-house, and the individuals which composed them mixing in the street with every mark of affection and good will.'<sup>1</sup>

The Attorney-general might have found the explanation in the laws which he was denouncing. When the Catholics were indulged they had attempted massacre and confiscation; when they were bitted and bridled they were peaceable and good-humoured. That this was the correct interpretation may be seen in the fruits of religious equality. When a Protestant prelate of the disestablished Church walks through an Irish city the devout Celt displays his piety by spitting on him as he passes.<sup>2</sup> A truth which has become now so painfully evident was not wholly unperceived in 1782. Mr. Flood defended the original imposition of the Penal Laws. 'Ninety years ago,' he said, 'the question was whether Popery and arbitrary power should be established in the person of King James, or the Protestant religion in the person of King William. Four-fifths of

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, February 15, 1782.

<sup>2</sup> Fact in one instance certainly. It was told to me by the bishop who was himself the sufferer, and

he described the thing not as having happened to him once, but as *since the disestablishment* happening repeatedly.

Ireland were for King James; they were defeated. I rejoice in their defeat. The laws that followed were not laws of persecution, they were a political necessity.' 'Are you,' he asked, 'prepared for a new government? What will be the consequence if you give Catholics equal powers with Protestants? Can a Protestant Constitution survive? The majority will attempt to alter the Constitution, and I believe they will be repelled by the minority. We will give all toleration to your religion; we will not give you political power, and the free ownership of land will bring political power in its rear.'<sup>1</sup>

To this argument the obvious answer was that the objection was too late. The principle had been conceded when the power of taking leases for 999 years had been granted. For the purpose of influencing elections a tenure for thirty generations was equivalent to a freehold. Nor could the more ardent patriots believe in the danger which Flood anticipated. The object was to raise the down-trodden Irish Catholic, to fit him for his place as the free citizen of an emancipated country, and already he was responding to the call.

'Ireland,' said Sir Boyle Roche, 'is like the Phoenix rising from its ashes. The debates on these laws have electrified the mass of the people. Instead of looking down like slaves they throw up their heads like men.'

Still, on this, and on other measures on which the patriotic heart was set, the House was timid, and the feeble knees required to be strengthened. Mr. Grattan

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, February, 1782.

fell back upon his friends in uniform, who in politics and in the field considered themselves Ireland's real sovereigns.

To the Volunteers the disaster at York Town had been an Irish victory. Elate and confident, they at once in their clubs repeated the resolutions of <sup>1782</sup> 1780, and declared that Parliament was controlled by a majority corrupted by the Castle. Delegates from the Ulster corps had been invited to meet at Dungannon, at the beginning of February, to consider the condition of the country. The appeal which Grattan resolved to make to them had probably been preconcerted when the delegates had arranged to assemble. Flood's opposition was troublesome. Like a skilful tactician Grattan invited Flood to share the honours of a campaign to most of the objects of which he was committed as deeply as Grattan himself. Grattan, Flood, and Lord Charlemont met privately in Dublin to draw up resolutions which the Dungannon delegates were to adopt.

The first, framed by Grattan himself, was 'That a claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, to make laws by which Ireland was to be bound, was illegal, unconstitutional, and a grievance.'<sup>1</sup>

The second, which was Flood's, declared, 'That the powers exercised by the Privy Council of both kingdoms under colour of the law of Poynings were unconstitutional and a grievance.'

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<sup>1</sup> Aimed at the 6th of George I.

On these points the triumvirs were agreed. The second contained the principle of Yelverton's Bill, which had not yet been returned from England.

Further than this Grattan knew that neither Flood nor Charlemont would go with him. He, therefore, without consulting them, himself added a third resolution :

'That we (the Volunteers) hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves ; that we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive these measures to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland.'<sup>1</sup>

A trusty messenger galloped down with these resolutions to Dungannon. Two hundred and forty re-  
Feb. 15 presentatives of the Ulster companies were in  
1782 attendance on the day for which they were called. The streets of the town were lined with Volunteer troops. The delegates assembled in the church, where they sate in consultation till nightfall. At eight o'clock the propositions were unanimously voted, and went out in Charlemont's name over all quarters of Ireland, to be adopted by the brother delegates of the corps in the southern provinces.

Inadvertence in England gave Grattan unexpected assistance. The universal soreness in Ireland on the subject of laws affecting them being passed in the British Parliament was so notorious that the practice

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<sup>1</sup> 'This resolution was crammed by Grattan into the messenger's bag after he was mounted.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii. p. 205.

had been avoided, as far as it conveniently could; and as long as no aggravated case was allowed to arise, there was a hope that the Irish Parliament might abstain from challenging the right, and bringing the Legislatures into open collision. Unhappily, the name of Ireland had been allowed to appear in four trifling measures which had just been passed at Westminster. Irish jealousy detected at once a malignant purpose, and with these Acts in his hand and with the Dungannon resolutions at his back, Grattan rose a week after the Catholic debate to move the long-threatened <sup>Feb. 22</sup> Declaration of the Independence of the Legislature of Ireland. He was a loyal subject of the King, he said. He professed to prize the connection with Great Britain second only to the liberties of his country; but he charged Lord North's Government with conspiring against the constitutional freedom of Ireland. With 'Demosthenic thunder' he insisted that he would never submit to British legislation, and, unlike Yelverton, he insisted that now was the moment, now, when Britain's hands were tied by a general war, for Ireland to break her chain.

How much of Grattan's action was a sincere emanation of patriotism, how much was due to concerted action with the English Whigs, to embarrass and overthrow Lord North's tottering Administration, was known to Grattan himself, and perhaps to no other person. The Whigs believed afterwards that he had played with them, and reproached him with ingratitude. It is certain, at any rate, that without their assistance,

even the Volunteers would not have enabled him to succeed.

The Attorney-general opposed the motion as hazardous, unreasonable, and unnecessary. Against Mr. Grattan's rhetoric he opposed the practical fact to which Fitzgibbon had alluded before, that the Act of Settlement rested on the Act of Forfeiture passed by the Long Parliament in the first year of the Irish Rebellion. A declaration that the Irish Parliament alone could pass laws to bind Ireland, would render the Act of Forfeiture invalid, would 'loosen the bonds of society, and leave the whole island to be grappled for by the descendants of the old proprietors.' Illusion could not endure the contact of so serious a reality. The Provost, Gervase Bushe, even George Ponsonby, took the Government side, and Grattan was beaten on a division by 137 to 68.

One impression left by the debate was remarkable. Yelverton proposed to meet the legal difficulty by 'a Bill for quieting possessions held under the Forfeiture Act.' Not a single speaker on either side, not even the Attorney-general, though challenged repeatedly to give his opinion, defended the principle of English Acts being of binding force in Ireland.

'The majority by which the motion was postponed,' Lord Carlisle wrote on the following day, 'will satisfy his majesty's Ministers that Government can prevent the question being carried. But the principle, nevertheless, is universally insisted on. Every rank and order of this nation are possessed of it. I question whether any lawyer would advise his client to bring his

cause to an issue on the validity of a British Act in this kingdom, or whether a jury would give a verdict on that foundation.'<sup>1</sup>

Yet, again, it was the English conquest which alone had given to the existing owners the possession of Irish land. It reposed upon English authority. If the Catholics, according to the Dungannon resolutions, were to secure their political as well as their civil rights, even the English *legislative* authority it might be dangerous to part with. A Protestant House of Commons might pass a 'quieting' Bill as Yelverton suggested; but a House returned by a Catholic majority might repeal it. This unpleasant possibility was brought into view by a great debate immediately after Grattan's defeat on Mr. Gardiner's Catholic Relief Bill. Mr. Gardiner, carrying out the Dungannon spirit, proposed now to abolish all distinctions between Catholic and Protestant. The first clause of his Bill, as he had remodelled it, declared every Irish subject who would subscribe a simple oath of allegiance and the declaration against the jurisdiction of foreign Prince or Potentate, entitled to his full rights as a citizen. Fitzgibbon pointed out the consequences, and Gardiner accepted his help to change the form once more. The single Bill was divided into two. The first affected property only. The Catholics were enabled to acquire freehold, to buy and sell, bequeath and inherit, like every one else. To this there was to opposition. Mr. Eden walked out of the House before the division

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, February 23, 1782.'



to indicate the impartiality of the Government, and the Bill was carried.

The second affirmed and carried out the principle of complete religious toleration, repealed the laws which bore upon the priests, and restored to Catholic parents their rights to educate their children whether at home or abroad. This Bill was postponed, not out of any hostile feeling, but from difference of opinion on the still unsettled question of mixed or separate education. On the right of Catholics to have their own *schools* no question was raised. On whether the Act should be repealed which forbade them to send their children to be educated abroad, there arose a debate, remarkable as proving how far the harshness of the penal laws had been softened in practical application.

Fitzgibbon declared that so far from consenting to the repeal of the foreign Education Act, he would himself move for the introduction of such a law if it did not already exist. 'He would not suffer the Catholics to resort to regions of bigotry and superstition, where they would imbibe ideas hostile to liberty, neither did he mean that they should receive no education.' 'The *University of Dublin was already open to Catholics by connivance.*' 'If they declined to receive an education there, it was not on account of religion, *for no religious conformity was required,* but only because Catholics feared their children would imbibe the principles there of a free constitution.'

Fitzgibbon spoke as Member for the University. The Provost (Hely Hutchinson) rose after him. Let those

who can feel the ignominy of England's ill-success in Ireland read in his language one more record of opportunity thrown away. 'My opinion,' the Pro-<sup>March</sup>vost said, 'is against sending Catholics abroad for education, nor would I establish Popish colleges at home. Our gracious Sovereign, who is legislator for the University, may, I think, with ease be prevailed on to pass a statute for admitting Catholics. They need not be obliged to attend the Divinity Professors. *They may have one of their own.* I would have part of the public money applied to their use, to the support of poor lads as sizers, and to provide premiums for persons of merit. I would have them go into examinations, and make no distinctions between them and the Protestants but such as merit might claim. If these people dare to worship God in their own way, why should not the academic badge they wear be a mark of spirit and a pledge of the union between them and the Protestants? To prepare the Catholics for the University I would increase the number of diocesan schools, and have the Catholics instructed gratis in them; they should receive the best education in the Established University at the public expense; but by no means should Popish colleges be allowed, for by them we should again have the Press groaning with theories of controversy, college against college, and subjects of religious disputation that have long slept would again awake, and awake with the worst passions of the mind.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, March, 1782.

There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

The history of Ireland is a history of such lost tides. Even now, at the eleventh hour, could England have laid hold with heartiness of a policy of which the Provost was shadowing out a part, Catholics and Protestants might still have been drawn together and towards the mother country; and disabilities would have then died of themselves because they no longer rested on disunion of sentiment. Even a united Irish nationality might have been safely allowed to revive, no more hostile to England than the nationalities of Wales or Scotland, but rising out of and resting upon an innocent and honourable pride.

It was not to be. No spirit of wisdom was presiding over the councils either of England or Ireland, whether among Whigs or Tories. It was with no desire to reconcile Irish Catholics to Protestantism and to the empire, that the Irish enthusiasts for reform were agitating to replace the Catholics in the Constitution, but to conjure into life the deluding phantom of Irish independence, to separate and not to reconcile, to snatch the moment of England's weakness to extort freedom for Ireland, which, being without strength to preserve, she must see pass from her like a shadow of a dream.

Men like Fitzgibbon and the Provost might contend within their own circle against the general madness, but every day the Viceroy found the atmosphere more heavily charged with electricity. He had done his

utmost, and his large majorities showed the strength of his influence in Parliament; but outside the walls the patriots were using language which might at any moment change into open violence.

In a most secret letter of the 3rd of March Lord Carlisle explained the position to Lord Hillsborough.

‘Mr. Grattan, from a natural enthusiasm, and Mr. Flood, from a different motive, have concurred with great earnestness in bringing forward every <sup>1782</sup> question tending to assert an independent right of legislation in Ireland. I have in no case suffered the smallest diminution of the asserted rights of Great Britain. I have called forth the whole strength of Government to repel every such attempt, and have resisted some of the strongest questions which were ever pressed in an Irish Parliament. The consequence of this steadiness has been great and uniform success. But I must now draw your Lordship’s attention beyond the consideration of parliamentary triumphs, which, if made the sole object of attention, may produce calamitous consequences. The restless and reasoning disposition of the Volunteers, which do not fall short of 30,000 men actually in arms,<sup>1</sup> the jealousy with which the interference of British laws has long been considered, the approaching meeting of the corps at the opening of the spring, the instigation of the men who from different motives are opposing the Government, the resentment excited by the uniform success of my Government, are all circumstances which induce me to look forward with uneasiness. Your

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<sup>1</sup> Grattan spoke of them as 100,000.

Lordship cannot be ignorant that the actual exercise of the authority of the British Parliament over Ireland was totally impracticable long before I arrived in the kingdom. There was not a magistrate or revenue officer, however dependent, who would venture to enforce  
1782 an English law. There was not a jury in the kingdom who would find a verdict under an English Act. I may infer that I can close the session without suffering a vote to be carried contrary to my wishes; but the support, and possibly the existence, of a permanent good Government in this kingdom depends on maintaining the many respectable friends of my administration in the fair opinion of their countrymen. Their weight is not only essential to my support in Parliament, but perhaps more materially among the Volunteer associations, from which they might be excluded if I should be compelled to close the session without quieting the ferment.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Carlisle's majorities were not entirely due to Mr. Eden's drafts on Mr. Robinson. Irish members would engage their services, and yet might be found wanting, as had been many times experienced at critical moments. But they had discovered that if they rushed along too fast on the patriotic career, they might blunder into positions where their estates would be in danger. They had gone into raptures over the Volunteers, but the sense that the country was in the hands of armed politicians who were not under military law

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, March 3, 1782. Most secret.' S. P. O.

was, on reflection, not particularly pleasant. 'It was the unanimous sentiment of every able man in the kingdom,' Lord Carlisle said, 'that the question of legislation was tending to some serious issue.' The Viceroy's earnest desire was to find a way out of the difficulty which moderate people would accept. It was not a question of mere national pride. Irish commerce was carried on under the British flag and protected by the British navy. Irish commercial interests abroad were under charge of British consuls. Laws must be passed from time to time in the British Parliament by which Ireland would be constructively affected. Yelverton, with Lord Carlisle's full approval, advised that every English Act comprehending Ireland should be re-enacted in the Irish Parliament. Fitzgibbon and Hussey Burgh both agreed that this was the most rational solution. Grattan was not at first violently hostile. Flood only refused to listen to a compromise, and would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender of the English right. He saw an opportunity of recovering his supremacy as the incorruptible assertor of Irish liberties, and in such a mood it was as useless to reason with him as with the orators of the Volunteers and the multitude who repeated their common-places in every corner of the island.

The situation was thus becoming really dangerous. Lord Carlisle sent the Cabinet for inspection a copy of papers about to be submitted for signature to the grand juries at the approaching assizes. The country gentlemen were invited to accept the Dungannon resolutions ;

to pledge themselves to the Irish nation and to one another to oppose the execution of any statute deriving its authority from England; to support Ireland's rights with life and fortune, and to promise annually to renew their obligations till those rights had been definitely conceded.<sup>1</sup>

Yelverton's measure for the alteration of Poyning's Act was still waiting in England, Lord North's Cabinet, already at its last gasp, not knowing what to decide about it. Being one at least of the measures on which Ireland's patriotic heart was set, Lord Carlisle thought that if it was returned immediately, he could procure a compromise on the question of legislative authority, and induce the grand juries to withhold their signatures. If Yelverton's bill was not returned, he declared himself ready to be guided by his majesty's commands and by the wisdom of his councils; but so far as his own judgment went, he declined to answer for the consequences. The friends of Government in both Houses were becoming frightened. If the suspense was protracted, they might be 'overawed by popular violence, and pass votes disclaiming British legislation.' Mr. Grattan had more than once spoken of possible hostile resolutions of the Irish Houses, 'as parliamentary ordinances to be maintained by the armed associations.' In dread of matters being forced into so dangerous an issue, the Viceroy said 'he had welcomed the help of Yelverton, Burgh, and Fitzgibbon.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, March 7. Most secret.'

<sup>2</sup> 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, March 16.' S. P. O.

A ministerial crisis being now rapidly approaching in England, the Irish Parliament adjourned for a month on the 14th of March. Before the separation, Grattan moved and carried a call of the House of Commons for the 18th of April. On that day all members were invited to be in their places as they tendered the rights of Ireland. These trying questions would then be revived, perhaps, under more favourable auspices. Lord Carlisle could not but confess that he had been in some degree infected by Irish sentiment in the judgment which he formed upon them. He had found, in common with every Viceroy who preceded him, that when he spoke to the Cabinet of wrongs done to Ireland, and recommended a measure or measures as tending to remedy them, he had been received either with insolent neglect or contemptuous refusal. English rule in Ireland had become so shameful a parody of all that is meant by righteous and legitimate authority, that nature herself repudiated it. Ireland could not and would not be governed any longer by English laws. Lord Carlisle thought, and avowed that he thought, that she might be governed well and happily by laws of her own; while, if England refused to consent to an arrangement, he anticipated inevitable convulsions, the end of which no one could foresee.<sup>1</sup>

Before the letter in which Lord Carlisle expressed these sentiments reached England, Lord North's administration was at an end. Lord Rockingham had

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Carlisle to Lord Hillsborough, March 19, 1782.'



been sent for by the king, and the Opposition, who had condemned the entire policy of the Government abroad and at home, in America and in Ireland, was about to pass to the direction of the empire.

## SECTION V.

THE surrender of Lord Cornwallis was the concluding scene of the efforts of England to recover her <sup>March,</sup> revolted colonies. The steady opposition of the <sup>1782</sup> Whigs had been ineffectual so long as apparent but useless victories attended the English campaigns. A second capture of a complete army gave force to arguments to which the national pride had refused to listen. Motions made in the British Parliament to discontinue the war in December and January were resisted by reduced majorities. On the 22nd of February the majority was reduced to one. On the 27th the Opposition carried an address to the king, who acquiesced in what was now unavoidable. Lord North resigned, and Rockingham, Fox, and Shelburne were called into office to wind up the quarrel. The battle had been fought along the entire line of ministerial policy. Both Fox and Rockingham had supported Grattan on the alteration of the Mutiny Bill, and Lord Carlisle's change of opinion did not save him from being involved in the fate of his friends. Ireland was no longer to be thwarted in developing her Constitution according to her own fancies, and the disgrace of Lord North's representative was made a peace-offering to the indignation of the patriots. Lord Carlisle was treated with singular discourtesy. The resignation of the Ministry was no sooner known in Dublin than Eden hastened over to

place Lord Rockingham in possession of the exact situation of the country. Eden found, on arriving in London, that he had crossed a curt despatch, informing Lord Carlisle that the king had no longer occasion for his services as Lord-Lieutenant of Yorkshire. It was a peculiarly offensive method of informing him that he must resign the Viceroyalty. The Cabinet had already chosen a successor for him in the Duke of Portland.

1782 They would have acted less imprudently if they had waited for the information which Eden would have given them, for, as the event proved, they were entirely ignorant of the spirit which they were about to encounter. They had assumed that as soon as his friends were in power Grattan would at once work in harmony with them. Though they hated Tories and Tory principles, they had inherited the traditions of English statesmen. They were trained politicians, unable to believe that the rash project of an Ireland really independent could be seriously entertained by a reasonable man; still less, if a few enthusiasts had formed so wild a dream, were they prepared to countenance it. They supposed that they had only to supersede Lord North's Viceroy by a nobleman of their own school to find the stormy waters settle into repose.

Lord Rockingham's eyes might have been opened had he read Lord Carlisle's last despatch. Had that nobleman been continued in office the Yelverton compromise might have been accepted. But Eden found that his chief had been treated in a fashion 'which amounted to personal insult.' When he told Lord

Shelburne that the hasty appointment of the Duke of Portland would work mischief, Shelburne answered briefly that he did not agree with him; and Eden, naturally indignant, 'refused to hold further intercourse with the Ministry' on the Irish subject.<sup>1</sup> He rose instead, the day after this conversation, in his place in the House of Commons. He declared Ireland to be on the edge of civil war; and to shield Lord Carlisle from the undeserved imputation of having caused so dangerous an excitement by resistance to the wishes of the people, he moved himself, on his own responsibility, the repeal of the 6th of George the First.<sup>2</sup> It was a rash act on his part, rising out of violent resentment. The House showed such serious displeasure, that he withdrew the motion almost as soon as it had been made. Colonel Luttrell (Lord Carhampton afterwards) enquired whether the repeal of that Act would satisfy Ireland. Eden could not say that it would, but declared that peace could not be preserved without it. Fox rose very angry. 'He,' he said, 'was now responsible for the honour of his country, and would not consent to see England humbled at the feet of Ireland.' 'The situation was worse than he had feared, and the persons to blame for it were Eden himself and Lord Carlisle.' The blame lay rather with Fox and his Whig friends, who had encouraged Grattan for their own purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Eden to Lord Shelburne, April 5, 1782.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

be once more reminded, which declared, *totidem verbis*, the right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> The English Act, let the reader

They had sown the seed, and they were to gather the harvest. Portland had sent Charles Sheridan over to learn Grattan's views. Sheridan wrote that Grattan told him that the Declaration of Independence would infallibly be passed after the recess. The Volunteers had pledged life and fortune to carry it, and nothing less would now satisfy the people. At the time of the adjournment they might have allowed the question of right to sleep, if they could have been assured that the power would not be exercised. But public sentiment had changed; nothing short of the repeal of the offensive Act would now preserve the union between the two countries.

It was true, then, that Independence was really contemplated. The connection was to be reduced to the tie of a common sovereign. Ireland was to be as Hanover, or the alternative was to be total separation. If total separation was not rather to follow as the consequence of such a wild arrangement, a thousand delicate problems would have to be considered and provided for. The Cabinet was still incredulous that Grattan could mean to precipitate a resolution of such pregnant quality as if it were on a question of common politics. Lord Charlemont at any rate must retain his senses, and Fox wrote to him to beg at least for a short delay. A Viceroy was going over whose sentiments were identical with Lord Charlemont's. Why should there be differences between them? The interests of Ireland and England could not be divided. Nothing more could be needed than the establishment of Whig principles in

every part of the empire.<sup>1</sup> Rockingham wrote in the same tone. He was unable to believe, he said, that an adjournment of the House of Commons for a fortnight or three weeks would not be consented to. Portland must have time to consult the leading members of the Patriot party. 'He could not think it good policy in the House of Commons of Ireland to carry a measure of so onerous a character with precipitancy.'<sup>2</sup>

English Whig statesmen never have understood Ireland, and perhaps never will understand it. In the Irish people there is one serious aspiration nursed in their heart of hearts and never parted with, and that is separation from England. Whatever the pretext for immediate agitation, this is what they mean, and every concession is valued only as a step towards the one great end. Nothing else will satisfy them, for nothing else meets their wishes. But as their object is one which reason declares to be unattainable, so they never pursue it by reasonable means. They wish passionately; they are unable to propose deliberately; their politics are the blind movements of impulsive enthusiasm, and English Liberals treat them as if they were serious, and play with them, and lead them to form hopes, which as soon as those hopes take their natural shape they are obliged to disappoint.

Had Grattan's theory of an Irish constitution been formed deliberately he would have avoided the appear-

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<sup>1</sup> 'C. J. Fox to Lord Charlemont, April 4.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Marquis of Rockingham to Lord Charlemont, April 9.'—*Ibid.*

ance of haste. The more gravely the step which he desired was taken, the more surely it would have been irrevocable. But he knew too well the materials of which his followers were composed. He knew that if once the Duke of Portland was allowed to talk in private with them, the patriot phalanx would dissolve into air. Men like Charlemont, and Hussey Burgh, and Yelverton had not parted with their senses, and if a responsible statesman laid before them the difficulties which they would have to encounter before they had committed themselves, they would recoil from their own schemes. Grattan, therefore, refused to allow a single hour for consideration. Portland hastened over to be in time for the call of the House on the 16th of April. He carried with him discretionary powers unusually large.<sup>1</sup> He still hoped that he might find Grattan less unmanageable than Sheridan reported. If he was disappointed, if matters came to the worst, and if conditions were insisted on to which England could not submit with dignity, he was permitted, as a last alternative, to throw up the Government, and to leave the Irish Protestant and Catholic face to face with an independence even more complete than they had desired.

On landing, he again tried to obtain a few days' adjournment. 'Heat and passion,' he was obliged to report, 'had taken stronger hold than persons in England could be aware of; and it was the unanimous

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<sup>1</sup> 'Among others, a warrant to the Postmaster-General to detain and open suspicious letters.—Duke of Portland to the Earl of Shelburne, April 15, 1782.' S. P. O.

opinion of every gentleman with whom he conversed that the attempt would be ineffectual.' He did not see Grattan, but continued to communicate with him through Charles Sheridan. The patriot demands had taken fuller shape in the recess. Ireland now required, 1, an independent Legislature; 2, a modification of Poynings' Act which would abolish the power of the English and Irish Councils in altering Bills; 3, a Biennial Mutiny Bill; and one more point now first introduced, a surrender of the right of appeal to England from the Irish Courts of Law. Grattan enquired whether on these points the Duke had come prepared to satisfy Ireland's expectations. The Duke had brought a formal message to the Irish Parliament that he was sent to consider their wishes; it would be answered by an address; and if the Duke would allow him to mention these four subjects, and inform the House that they would be conceded, Grattan declared himself ready to move the address in the place of the Declaration of Rights. The Duke required a copy of what Grattan intended to say. 'On perusal of it,' he said, 'I found the points contended for marked with such harshness and insisted on with such resolute pertinacity that I did not hesitate to return the paper.'<sup>1</sup>

The Speaker and the Provost appeared to unite in condemning Grattan's language, and undertook themselves to draw an address not liable to objection, which might equally prevent 'the Declaration of Rights.'

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<sup>1</sup> 'Duke of Portland to Lord Shelburne, April 16. Most secret. S. P. O.



This, too, when it was produced, the Duke found himself unable to sanction, for it demanded the repeal of the 6th of George I.

'In this dilemma,' he wrote, 'I found myself within half an hour of the meeting of Parliament with only a choice of difficulties. I was certain that no effectual, and doubtful if any, resistance could be made to the Declaration which Mr. Grattan was to move. I was ill-informed of the strength of the Administration. I had to apprehend the effects of disappointment upon the minds of those who supported Lord Carlisle on condition of being recompensed at the end of the session.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus circumstanced, Portland himself sketched a neutral address, which he gave to Ponsonby and Conolly to be used at their discretion. He told the Council plainly that the Cabinet would consent to no specific measures till better informed of the wishes of the people. He found to his additional mortification that Lord Carlisle's recall was most unpopular, that the House meditated a vote of thanks to him and to Eden, with a recommendation of the latter to the King for some mark of distinguished favour.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Duke of Portland to Lord Shelburne, April 16. Most secret.'  
S. P. O.

## SECTION VI.

Now at length the fateful hour had come when the sun of Ireland's glory was to break in meridian April, splendour through the clouds which had so long 1782 overshadowed her. For a month every Irish heart had beat high with hope. On the 16th of April Mr. Grattan was to move a Declaration of Rights, which recalled America's Declaration of Independence; and the House of Commons, schooled by the Volunteers, and itself in a brief dream of patriotic intoxication, was by its vote to tell England and the world that Ireland's thralldom was ended. A grand review on the 17th was to celebrate the national triumph. The Volunteers had poured into Dublin from every part of Leinster. They were marching in uniform along the streets and quays, with the harp banners flying, and bands playing the national airs. Cavalry were prancing in a splendour which told for many a year on the estates of the noble lords who were their colonels and patrons. Artillery, served out of the Government stores, with the Woolwich stamp on them, were booming at intervals defiance of the foreign enemy, Great Britain being the foreigner. The nation was showing herself gloriously in arms for the occasion when her chosen hero was to announce her regeneration to an admiring world.

Amidst these scenes Portland drove from the Castle to the Parliament House.

The message was read by Hely Hutchinson. The King, it briefly said, being concerned to find that there was discontent among his loyal subjects of Ireland, recommended the Lords and Commons to take it into immediate consideration. Ponsonby followed with Portland's address, which was a mere echo of the message.

Then Grattan rose. He had been ill. He looked worn and anxious, but in his opening sentence he assumed that his cause was won.

'I am now,' he said, 'to address a free people. Ages have passed away, and this is the first moment in which you could be distinguished by that appellation. I have spoken on the subject of your liberty so often that I have nothing to add, and have only to admire by what heaven-directed steps you have proceeded until the whole faculty of the nation is braced up to the act of her own deliverance. I found Ireland on her knees. I watched over her with an eternal solicitude. I have traced her progress from injuries to arms, and from arms to liberty. Spirit of Swift, spirit of Molyneux, your genius has prevailed. Ireland is now a nation. In that new character I hail her, and bowing to her august presence I say, *Esto Perpetua.*'

Into what wild tumult of applause floors and galleries burst at hearing these words it is needless to tell. Neither is it needed to follow further the stream of eloquence which has passed into the standard manuals of oratory among the schoolbooks of two hemispheres. The brilliance of oratory is at all times and from the very nature of the art in the inverse ratio of the truth

contained in it; and as there never was a more shining speech delivered in the English language, so never was there speech with less substance in it which would bear the test of time. Nations are not born on the floors of debating societies, nor on the parade-ground of volunteers. Freedom must be won on the battle-field or it is perishable as the breath that boasts of it.

In truth and fact, Ireland, bound to England by situation, and inhabited by a people who would howl for liberty but never fight for it, had snatched from the embarrassments of her neighbour what she could neither keep nor use worthily while it was hers; and this glorious outburst of Grattan's is the sharpest satire on the race whom he was flattering with his vain bombast.

But the passing moment was his own. The American wound was unhealed. There had been enough of bloodshed, enough of coercion, coercion especially of Ireland, which in her depression had been so scandalously mishandled. England by injustice had trained the Irish into anarchy. Whether they would make better laws for themselves, and obey them, was an experiment at least worth the trying.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Whether Ireland was prepared to resist by force if Grattan's propositions had been rejected is a point on which there were differences of opinion. Grattan himself said, Yes. His friend, Mr. Day, says for him, Mr. Grattan was resolved to assist, even by arms, if driven to it, the liberties of Ireland.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii. p. 272. Lord Clare says, No, and implies that the Duke of Portland was deceived by idle bravado. 'I can assert with perfect confidence,' Clare said, in his speech on the Union, 'that no gentleman of Ireland would at that day have drawn his sword against Great Britain

The rhetorical part of the performance being over, Mr. Grattan moved an amendment to the address to assure the King of the loyalty of the Irish, but to tell him at the same time that 'Ireland was a distinct kingdom with a separate Parliament, and that this Parliament alone had a right to pass laws for her.' 'In the maintenance of that right the liberties of Irishmen consisted, and they would only yield it with their lives.' The points were then rehearsed which England was required to concede, and the demonstration over, the House consented to be adjourned while reference was made to the Cabinet.

Irish vanity had been gratified, and Portland thought it possible that after the display some cooler thought might follow. He held private conferences with hopeful members. He talked of negotiation. If Ireland were to receive such large concessions she must give something in return, and he hinted at a land-tax. Language of this kind was premature. For the moment the whole nation was delirious. Grattan desired a friend in London to tell Lord Shelburne that negotiation was impossible. Ireland demanded her rights, and did not mean to pay for them. The alternative he scarcely condescended to veil. 'If our requests are refused,' he said, 'we retire within ourselves, preserving our allegiance, but not executing English laws or English judgments. We consume our own manufactures

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and it certainly was the duty of the King's servants, in whom his representative reposed a confidence, | to have explained this to the Duke.'

and keep on terms of amity with England, but with that diffidence which must exist if she is so infatuated as to take away our liberty.' <sup>1</sup>

To show the Duke the uselessness of intrigue, one of the earliest acts of the House of Commons on its re-assembling was to pass the vote of thanks to Lord Carlisle, which he had deprecated as an insult to himself. 'It is no longer,' Portland wrote to Shelburne on the 26th of April,<sup>2</sup> 'the Parliament of Ireland that is to be managed or attended to, it is the whole of this country. It is the Church, the law, the army (I fear when I consider how it is composed), the merchant, the tradesman, the manufacturer, the farmer, the labourer, the Catholic, the Dissenter, the Protestant. All sects, all sorts and descriptions of men, unanimously call on Great Britain for a full and unequivocal satisfaction. They know and feel their strength. They know it is not in your power to send over such a force as will compel them to relinquish their claims; and having so recent an example of the fatal consequences of coercive measures they are in no fear that Great Britain will attempt a second experiment. For myself, during the preservation of the remains of the British Empire, my opinion is that you should concede to this country the full enjoyment of a free and independent Legislature, but that a line should be drawn to prevent their interference in matters of state and external commerce. Modify Poyning's Act for them. The abuse of it by

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<sup>1</sup>. 'H. Grattan to Mr. Day, April 22, 1782.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> S. P. O. 'Most secret and confidential.'

the Privy Council of this kingdom has been singularly offensive. As to the judicature, I know not what to advise. As I undertook this arduous employment with hopes which I had soon the mortification to be obliged to relinquish, but with views of which I shall never lose sight, I think it my duty to state shortly what I conceive will be the consequences of rejecting or delaying to satisfy the wishes of this country. For that a few words will suffice. In either case there would be an end of all government.'

The Duke of Portland, in his inexperience of Ireland, believed all that was said to him. Shelburne understood his countrymen better, and was more sceptical.

In all such contentions,' he replied, 'men asked for more at the beginning than they expected to get. It was possible the Irish Parliament would recede in some degree from its extreme demands.' If this was not so, and 'if the ties which had hitherto subsisted between the two countries were to be loosened or cut asunder,' he enquired, 'what plan had been thought of to preserve the remaining connection ;' 'how confusion was to be prevented from the separate action of Parliaments, with distinct and equal powers without any operating centre ?' <sup>1</sup>

England was not required to answer by return of mail to questions affecting the integrity of the empire. Time was allowed her to consider, and Portland mean-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Shelburne to the Duke of Portland, April 29. Secret.'  
S. P. O.

while was continuing to feel his way under the surface, and beginning to find men listen to him. He mentioned three or four persons who had been removed from the Privy Council for opposing the Government. He had ascertained, he said, that they could be depended on for the future, and he wished to replace these. It is instructive to find that Mr. Flood was one of them. Stung by his want of success among his old friends, Flood had given signs that he was once more marketable. The Viceroy admitted, however, that he was less certain of him than of the others. 'I must ask a discretionary power,' he wrote, 'in carrying into effect the commands I solicit respecting Mr. Flood. I would not restore him unless I was persuaded he would feel a just sense of the King's goodness to him.' These gentlemen were not all. The Lords and Commons recovering their presence of mind began to bid for favour again with something like the old eagerness. Ireland was not yet independent, and while they had still something to give which England wanted they made the most of the opportunity. So pressing were they and so barefaced that, glad as he was to gain support, he could not quite restrain a solemn astonishment.

'If his majesty's magnanimity and liberality,' he said, 'should influence the Parliament of Great Britain to concede with grace the material point, I believe that the royal favour might be dispensed in this kingdom with a more sparing and economical hand, and that the honour of serving the Crown would take precedence of the emoluments to which I fear the attention of the



King's servants in this kingdom has been of late too much directed.'

Not yet did Portland understand Ireland. He was to discover that so far from a loftier spirit being generated by an emancipated constitution, the shrewd Irish politicians most valued the rights on which they were insisting, as a lever by which to extort a larger price for their services.

May, 1782  
May, 1782  
May came and England was still pausing on her reply. On the 4th, the Irish Parliament again adjourned for three weeks, and the Duke, presuming on Grattan's patience, tried to persuade him to be content with some 'middle term,' and, perhaps, refer matters to a commission. Assuming that Portland was acting under directions from the Cabinet, and possibly afraid that he might be too successful, Grattan wrote directly to Fox to beg him not to delude himself. Every point must be yielded. He and his friends had pledged their lives and fortunes, and could not and would not give way. 'My country,' he said haughtily, 'must have been much misunderstood if it is thought she has asked for a thing which she cannot give herself. I agree with you in wishing for a settlement, but nothing less than what has been stated will satisfy Ireland. There must be no foreign legislation, no foreign judicature, no legislative council, no negotiation, no commissioners.'<sup>2</sup> To the Viceroy, too, Grattan made

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord Shelburne, private and confidential, April 21, 1782.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Grattan to Fox, May 6, 1782.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

it equally plain that 'middle terms' need not be thought of.

'There is still an appearance of Government,' the Duke reported to Fox, on the 28th of April, 'but if you delay or refuse to be liberal, Government cannot exist here in its present form, and the sooner you recall your lieutenant and renounce all claim to this country the better.'<sup>1</sup> Still more emphatically, and showing how clearly the alternative was before his own mind, and had been considered in the Cabinet before he left England, he wrote on the 6th of May to Lord Shelburne:—

'Every day's experience convinces me not only of the impossibility of prevailing on this country to recede from any one of the claims set forth in the addresses, but of the danger of new ones being started. The hope I expressed of reserving the final judicature, if not totally, at least by retaining a writ of error, no longer exists.' 'It is in vain to argue on the disadvantages which I conceive the alteration of the Act of Henry VII.<sup>2</sup> will produce in this country. The wishes of the people are fixed; and reasoning among ourselves as to what is for or against their interests, is as much too late as it has been fruitless and delusive in respect to other countries. I consider the question is carried. I shall proceed, therefore, to state the plan which I hope might lay the foundation for new relations and permanent friendship. I recommend the positive assurance to be

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Portland to Fox, April 28, 1782.'—*Life of Grattan*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Poynings' Act.

given them of the alteration of the Mutiny Bill, the modification of Poyning's Act, the repeal of the 6th of George I., writs of error to be no longer issued at our Court of King's Bench. England in return must insist on "a settlement of the precise limits of independence which is required," the consideration which should be given for the protection expended, and the share which Ireland must contribute to the support of the empire. The regulation of trade would very properly make a part of a treaty, and the dissatisfaction expressed by many commercial persons at the delusive advantages of free trade would be a fit subject for discussion.' 'In my apprehension,' Portland went on, 'proposals such as I have stated cannot be resisted in Parliament with any effect. The refusal to accede to them, or to appoint Commissioners for a final adjustment on the ground of their own address, when they are assured that persons are properly authorized for that purpose, *would be such an indication of sinister designs as would warrant your direction to me to throw up the Government and leave them to that fate which their folly and treachery should deserve.* If such should be the sentiments of the King's servants, after using every endeavour to bring them to a sense of their condition, and of the consequences of such a refusal, I should hesitate as little to order the yacht and leave them to be the victims of their own insanity, as I should say that it would be useless to attempt to coerce them, and that the country on such terms would not be worth possessing.'

'I feel the strongest and most poignant reluctance

in being obliged to recommend the mode of relation which I have taken the liberty to suggest. I see no other resource, for I am convinced that the spirit of this country is raised so high, that she would expose herself to any hazard rather than relinquish or retract any of the claims she has insisted on.' 'It is my duty further to state to your lordship *that unless it is determined that the knot which binds the two countries should be severed for ever*, it is necessary I should be authorized as soon as possible to assure the leaders of the Opposition of the intention of the English Administration to exert their influence in convincing the Parliament of Great Britain of the propriety of conceding the points required by the Irish Parliament, for without such assurance it is vain to ask their assistance in any shape whatever.'<sup>1</sup>

Could England have anticipated at this moment the splendid triumphs of her arms with which the war which lost her America was about, notwithstanding, to be closed, the Cabinet might, perhaps, have decided to read Ireland the lesson which she so much needed, and to leave her, as Portland suggested, to be 'the victim of her own insanity.' The United States were free, but the allied powers were to gain little by having espoused their quarrel. At the beginning of the year no light had yet broken on the gloomy prospect. An expedition

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Portland to | land in the State Paper Office. Ex-  
Lord Shelburne. Secret. May 6.' | tracts from them were laid by Mr.  
Abridged. I quote from the ori- | Pitt before Parliament during the  
ginal letters of the Duke of Port- | debates on the Union.

against the Dutch at the Cape had failed. Minorca, after a defence only less gallant than Elliott's, had fallen on the 5th of February. Gibraltar held out, but the fate of Minorca was ominous that Gibraltar, too, might not resist for ever. De Grasse had returned, after Cornwallis's surrender, to the West Indies with the united fleets of France and Spain, and one after another the Leeward Islands had surrendered to their overwhelming strength. Jamaica's turn was next to follow. Jamaica, however, was not to be lost without an effort to save it, and Sir George Rodney returned to the West India station with all the force which England could supply. Burke had depreciated Rodney's ability, and on the change of ministry an Admiralty order had been issued for his recall. Before the messenger could sail with it the work had been gloriously finished. Rodney came up with de Grasse on the evening of the 11th of April, forced him into action in the morning, and before nightfall the enormous armament was taken, sunk, or scattered. De Grasse himself was a prisoner, Jamaica was saved, and France was paid home for her share in the capitulation of York Town.

Beaten from the West Indies the French and Spaniards turned all their efforts on Gibraltar. Forty thousand men were collected for a land attack. The ruined trenches were repaired and remounted with 170 guns. The Duc de Crillon, the conqueror of Minorca, took the command. The Comte d'Artois and the Duc de Bourbon came to be present in person at the crowning humiliation which was to fall on the ancient enemy.

Enormous floating batteries, bomb proof against such guns as had been hitherto in use, thronged with men and armed with the largest cannon which skill could construct, were anchored under the batteries, with the combined fleets lying behind to support them. <sup>September,</sup> On the morning of the 13th of September, the <sup>1782</sup> most terrible bombardment ever borne by a single fortress was opened by sea and land on Elliott and his five thousand English. The rigid blockade now long unrelieved had reduced them to rice and bread, and to half rations of those. The 'roast potatoes' of Gibraltar were the red-hot shot with which Elliott replied to the hail of shell which rained upon him. All the forenoon the balls dropped hissing into the sea from off the impenetrable armour of the floating platforms. As the sun began to slope to the west light columns of smoke were seen ascending from them, first here, then there, and then all along the line. Through telescopes the crews were observed leaving their guns and rushing to and fro with water-buckets, and still the smoke gained upon them, and through the smoke, clearer and brighter as daylight waned, came swirling tongues of flame. The doomed batteries lay incapable of motion, and fiercer yet flew the red shot from the casemates upon them till they became a roaring bank of fire floating on the sea. No answering shell came any longer from their port-holes. The seamen and artillerymen were seen leaping into the water to escape the flames, and struggling back into the flames to escape the water; while at awful intervals magazine after magazine exploded, and in a

glare of lurid splendour, blazing timbers and torn limbs of men were shot as from a volcano into the sulphur-loaded air.

Boats went out from the quay and saved all that could be found alive. The ships of the besiegers lay paralyzed by the appalling ruin, and after that awful night no more attempts were made to drive the English from the rock which they had so magnificently defended. A few days later Lord Howe came with a fleet from England. The French and Spanish squadron, though superior in numbers, dared not face him, and slunk away into their own harbours. The war was ended. The American colonies were lost; but Great Britain still held fast grasped the sceptre which the greatest powers in Europe had in vain sought to tear from her, and sat down with the bloody laurels about her brow still sovereign of the seas.

At such a moment she could have afforded with neither fear nor shame to have granted to Ireland the independence which Grattan threatened that if unconceded Ireland would take for herself. No foreign power could have penetrated the floating patrol with which England could have surrounded her shores, and shut her up within her own limits. Protestant and Catholic, Dissenter and Churchman, Anglo-Irishman and Celt, would have enjoyed to the full the freedom for which they were so clamorous. A few years of liberty on those terms would probably have satisfied Grattan. The mutinous colony would have discovered the meaning of the 'Nationality' which they were so eager to revive,

and such of the population of both races as survived when another Mac Morrough re-invited England's interference, would have been contented to remain for the future members of the British empire on less uneasy terms.

Circumstances forbade the experiment. The victory came too late, and Portland had to yield unconditionally. On the 17th of May, before the news May arrived of Rodney's victory, Lord Shelburne and Fox invited the two Houses of the British Parliament to do what Eden had been rebuked for proposing a month before, and repeal the statute of George I. Fox spoke frankly, and, in the main, with truth. He admitted that Ireland had a right to distrust British legislation 'because it had hitherto been employed only to oppress and distress her.' Had she never felt the English power over her as 'a curse' *she would never have complained of it.* Fatally for the interests of both countries, England had used its strength to establish an impolitic monopoly in trade to enrich one at the expense of the other. So lately as but four years since, when the Irish asked to have their rights restored to them, Parliament refused to listen. Demands were disregarded which were no less modest than just. The influence of ministers was exerted against them, perhaps for the purpose of preserving a few votes on other occasions, and the rights and distresses of Ireland were forgotten. Circumstances had changed. The Irish were now ambitious of larger concessions, and he advised that they should be granted. It was not that he was afraid, but he would rather, he said, see Ireland totally



separated than kept in obedience by force. He undertook for them, like many an eager statesman before and since, that if they had what they now asked, 'they would be attached to England even to bigotry.'

In neither House was there any opposition. The necessary measures could not be despatched on the instant, but resolutions which would be received as binding were passed, and were forwarded by Lord Shelburne to Portland.

The repeal of the Act of George I., Shelburne said, would remove what the Irish termed the principal cause of their discontent. The Writ of Error would be given up also if they persisted in demanding it. Irish Bills should be no longer altered or suppressed in Council. The Mutiny Bill should be made biennial, and no conditions should be insisted on. The Irish would be expected to make some suitable return, but what the return was to be should be left to their honour, good faith, and generosity. On one point only, to prevent future differences, there must be a distinct understanding. The Cabinet must know what powers were to be reserved to the Crown.<sup>1</sup>

All was now over. The Irish Parliament came together again after the three weeks' adjournment,<sup>2</sup> to hear from the Viceroy's lips that England had given way on the four points, and that they had obtained their desire. The announcement was conveyed with the more dignity that it was accompanied with the accounts which had now come in from the West Indies.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Shelburne to Portland, May 18, 1782.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> May 27.

In the ecstasy of joy into which Ireland precipitated herself, it seemed as if Fox's anticipations were really to be fulfilled. Sir Lucius O'Brien exclaimed that the strength of three millions of people was added to the British standard. Cordial now, as before he had been determined, Grattan grasped England's hand as of a recovered friend. Confidence in Ireland's honour should never be placed in vain. 'We were pledged to recover our rights,' he said. 'We are now pledged to Great Britain, which, by acceding to our claims, has put an end to all further questions.' England's victories were now Ireland's. Ireland should have a share in all her future glories. Mr. Grattan concluded by moving for a grant, which was conceded instantly, of a hundred thousand pounds and twenty thousand seamen as a contribution to the navy of Great Britain.

When the exultation over the political triumph was exhausted, the next thought was of the hero by whom it had been won. Mr. Bagenal, the same who fought De Blaquiere, moved for a committee to purchase an estate and build a suitable mansion for Ireland's illustrious benefactor, Henry Grattan.

'Far be it from me,' said the enthusiastic gentleman, 'to compare even the services of a Marlborough to those for which we stand indebted. We have no deductions to make from our gratitude. Without superstition, men may well record him among the most prosperous interpositions of Heaven.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, May 27, 1782.

Grattan rose to protest, but his voice was drowned in shouts of 'Adjourn.' A day was appointed for a general thanksgiving. An address of gratitude was voted to the Crown, and addresses of thanks and congratulations to Portland and to Rodney. But the first thought of every one was, 'What should a generous country do for Grattan?' The Duke was as bitter at the meditated profusion as if the revenue was a fund sacred to Parliamentary corruption.

'Such is the inattention to the distressed circumstances of the country,' he said, 'that some management was necessary to keep this idea within bounds. I tried, but ineffectually, to have confined them to a recommendation of Mr. Grattan to the favour of the Crown, or at least to have got the quantum of reward left to his majesty. I next endeavoured for their own sakes to prevail on them to adopt the mode of annuity to Mr. Grattan and his heirs, and on its being represented that a house was necessary as well as an income, I expressed my readiness to request his majesty to permit the Lodge lately contracted for in the Phoenix Park for the summer residence of the Lord-Lieutenant to be settled on Mr. Grattan. For this I was the more anxious as, in addition to the very extravagant price which the public have agreed to pay for it, I am persuaded that it will require at least 10,000*l.* more to make it fit for the reception of the chief governor. No argument, however, would avail, and nothing would have prevented the vote in favour of Mr. Grattan, amounting to as large a sum as, or possibly exceeding, that given towards

raising seamen (100,000*l.*), but the interposition and firmness of Mr. Grattan's own particular friends, who assured the House Mr. Grattan would certainly refuse so glaring a mark of profusion.'<sup>1</sup>

Fifty thousand pounds was the sum at last agreed on, with a further grant for a house, many members, however, still raising their voices in protest. Mr. Ogle, of Wexford, hoped that Ireland was not imitating Athens, which rewarded Miltiades with a picture. The Provost, flying into rhetoric in his old days, said that Chatham had received four thousand a year for his own life and his son's, and 'great as were the abilities of Chatham he was less deserving than the object of the present motion.'

Grattan himself lent no countenance to this idle adulation. He accepted his 50,000*l.* as a June retaining fee, and declared that thenceforth his services were mortgaged to Ireland. He would accept no office and enter into no engagement which might embarrass him in his duty to his country.

Nothing now remained but to celebrate in some fitting way the birthday of Irish nationality. Unhappily, as an Irish patriotic writer exclaims on the occasion, 'it was written in the book of fate that the felicity of Ireland should be short-lived.' Grattan had been modest in his victory, however unscrupulous the means by which he obtained it; and however worthless it was ultimately to prove, in the eyes of the Irish nation it was of infinite

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Portland to Lord Shelburne, June 5, 1782.'  
S. P. O.

value. Had he consented to a compromise he could not have named a reward too high for Rockingham and Portland to have thrust upon him. Even patriots cannot subsist on air, and in allowing a modest provision to be settled upon him, Mr. Grattan was rather conferring an honour than receiving a favour. So every rational person must have regarded the grant of the Parliament, but there were members of the House of Commons who were not rational. Was Grattan to have a splendid reward, and was the antagonist of Lord Townshend, who had fought for Ireland when Grattan was a child, was Henry Flood, the veteran warrior of liberty, to have nothing? Mr. Montgomery, of Donegal, rose to remind the House 'of the best, the most able, the most indefatigable, the most sincere man that had ever sacrificed private interest to the advantage of his country; who had relinquished the most lucrative office in the State rather than desert the constitution of Ireland.' He moved an address to the King, to restore Flood to the Vice-Treasurership. 'He would not move,' he said, 'for a pecuniary reward, as he knew the right hon. gentleman was above receiving an alms from his country.'

The advocacy of Flood did not require an insult to Grattan, an insult the more uncalled for as Grattan was at once poor and profusely generous, and Flood had a large private fortune. The House listened with surprise and annoyance. Colonel Fitzpatrick, the Secretary, seeing how bad an effect Montgomery had produced, replied coldly that the Vice-Treasurership was no longer vacant.

Montgomery did not improve his friend's chances by his rejoinder. 'He had indeed heard,' he said, 'that the place had been bestowed on a certain insignificant and contemptible Sir George Yonge, whose ill-offices to Ireland might possibly at some time be properly rewarded,' but at present Sir George Yonge might be required to give way.

Fitzpatrick placed himself in the hands of the House. If the House pleased to vote an address to remove Sir George Yonge in Mr. Flood's favour, he said he could make no objection.

But now up started Sir George Yonge's friends, among them Sir Henry Cavendish, a noted fire-eater, as the reader will remember. 'The charges against that gentleman,' Sir Henry said, 'he would prove false, false, false, absolutely false verbatim et literatim.'

Following so immediately on the grand movement which was to give Ireland a renewal of life, this outburst of feeling was unlucky and unpromising. What followed was very much worse. Had Flood's pretensions been modestly put forward, the House would very likely have supported them. Introduced as they had been introduced by Montgomery, his claims were ignored and thrust aside. Those who had once hung upon his lips slighted him. He had lost the office for which he was so anxious. His advances to Portland had not recovered for him his seat in the Council, and he was childishly disappointed. With a transparent jealousy he looked for flaws in Grattan's workmanship. He discovered that after all both Grattan and the House of Commons

were the dupes of English cunning, and if within the walls of the House he counted but few followers, he found credulous listeners in the Volunteers and the mob, whose suspicions were ready to kindle at every word uttered against the hereditary oppressors.

At Ireland's desire England had repealed the 6th of George I. Mr. Flood insisted that the repeal was nothing, because what England surrendered England might resume. He required, and the Volunteers echoed his demand, that the British Parliament should pass a special Act renouncing for ever all pretence of legislating for Ireland. It was obvious folly, for one Parliament could not bind its successor. An Act which one Parliament passed another might repeal. Nay, the very appeal to Britain to renounce a right implied that it at present existed.

'If the security which the honourable gentleman desires be a British statute,' said Grattan, 'I reject it. I would reject Magna Charta under a British statute. We have not come to England for a charter but with a charter, and we have asked her to cancel all her declarations made in opposition to it. This is the true idea of the situation of Ireland. If we go on with a spirit of insatiety, supposing ideal dangers, we may find food for perpetual discontent.'

Grattan, too, was hereafter to find food for discontent on equally imaginary grounds, but compared with Flood he was sane. The sense and nonsense of the House of Commons alike condemned an absurd outburst, which was so plainly the creation of spleen and envy.

The 6th of George I., said Yelverton, asserts the power of the British Legislature to bind Ireland. The repeal of the law is a renunciation as plain as words can make it.

‘Our asking a renunciation,’ said Bagenal, with an illustration too familiar to Irish experience, ‘would be the revival of the claim. A woman is violated. A man usurps the powers of a husband, gives out she is his wife, lavishes her fortune upon prostitutes, at last abandons her. Is it prudent of that woman to sue for a divorce? Might not such a suit be pleaded in proof of a claim of which no other evidence can be produced?’

Nothing satisfied Flood. He replied with a tempest of words which raged for hours and ended in a shriek.

‘Was the voice with which I utter this,’ he said, ‘the last effort of expiring nature; was the accent which conveys it to you the breath which was to waft me to that grave to which we all tend, and to which my footsteps rapidly accelerate, I would go on; I would make my exit by a loud demand of your rights.’

Oratory is the saddest of efforts when the audience is out of sympathy with the speaker. The House knew Flood and knew his motives. They would not have the renunciation in any form. Leave was asked to bring in a Bill declaring the sole and exclusive right of the Irish Parliament to make laws in all cases whatever, internal or external, for the kingdom of Ireland. Such a Bill, had it been passed, would have given Ireland separate foreign relations, and a complete separate code of com-



mercial policy. The House rejected it without a division. But the House stultified itself immediately after by resolving 'that leave had been refused because the exclusive right of legislation in the Irish Parliament in all cases, *internal and external*, had been already asserted by Ireland and fully, irrevocably, and finally acknowledged by England.'<sup>1</sup>

They had rushed in the wild haste of enthusiasm into what they called constitutional liberty; and ere it was a month old, they were quarrelling over its limits, and were unable to say clearly what rights they had gained, or in what their liberty consisted.

In the midst of their differences, however, they had not neglected important work, and many measures—some foolish, some excellent, and too long delayed—were swept through by the impetuous torrent of this memorable session. Poyning's Act was shaken off. Heads of intended Bills were no longer submitted to the Privy Councils of England and Ireland to be amended or approved before they could take the form of laws, and as such be voted upon. The Irish Parliament drew its Bills like the English Parliament, for the Crown to accept or reject. The process was simplified. A power, which had been abused, was abolished; but a precaution, which for 300 years had prevented a direct collision between the Legislatures of the two countries, no longer existed. The Writs of Error, by which disputed causes might be transferred by appeal from the Irish to the English courts of law, ceased to be issued. The Irish

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, June 19, 1782. *Commons' Journals*, *Ibid.*

House of Peers was made the final court of appeal in Irish cases, with a result which was tragically apparent on the first important question which came before the jurisdiction of that tribunal. The two Catholic Relief Bills, introduced by Mr. Gardiner, were carried. Catholics might now purchase freeholds like other subjects, open schools and educate their children when and how they pleased. Their stables were no longer open to inspection, or their horses above the value of five pounds liable to be seized by the Government, or taken from them by informers.<sup>1</sup> A cheap and inonerous system of registration was adopted for the Catholic priests; and the Acts which in any shape interfered with the freedom of religious worship were repealed.<sup>2</sup> The Habeas Corpus Act, so long withheld, was conceded. The tenure of the Irish judges was placed at last on the English level. Presbyterian marriages, so long and so bitterly disputed by the bishops, were made valid in law. The Perpetual Mutiny Act, fought over with so much obstinacy, became biennial, and the Irish Parliament acquired constitutional control over the Irish military establishments.

Now, at last, all obstacles to the Irish millennium were gone; every measure had been granted which the people had demanded as necessary to their happiness. The new era might now begin, and the business of the

<sup>1</sup> The horses of Mr. Wyse were once taken from him under the Penal Act, from a plea of some anticipated disturbance. Wyse the next day, like another Jason, drove

his carriage into Waterford with four bulls.

<sup>2</sup> 21 & 22 George III. c. 24, s. 62. Irish statutes.

year was wound up by an address of congratulation to the Duke of Portland, drawn by Grattan himself.

'We have seen,' so the address said, 'the judges rendered independent of the Crown; the mutiny law abridged in duration; the jurisdiction of the hereditary judges of the land restored; the vicious mode of passing laws in this land reformed; the sole and exclusive right of legislation, external as well as internal, in the Irish Parliament firmly asserted on the part of Ireland and unequivocally acknowledged on the part of Great Britain. We have seen this great national arrangement established on a basis which secures the tranquillity of Ireland, and unites the affections as well as the interests of both kingdoms. The name of Bentinck will remain engraved on our hearts; and whenever your Grace shall withdraw from the administration of the affairs of this country, you will be attended, not by forced and jaded benedictions, but by the manly and dignified love of a free people.'

A last effort was made by Flood to disturb the general harmony. He moved an amendment, that England's concessions were still insufficient, for the English Parliament had still power to revoke them; and 'that the people of Ireland were growing more and more of that opinion.' It was perfectly true, and the difficulty rose from the nature of the case, which nothing which Mr. Flood might do could remedy. So long as England was the stronger country, prudence and respect for her engagements could alone prevent her from asserting her superiority. The dead could not bind the living, and

each generation would have its own view of its obligations. It will be seen that the Parliament of Great Britain humoured afterwards the nervous sensitiveness of Ireland so far as to paint the lily, and to confirm its acts by further words of assurance; but no additional promises could add strength to the engagements to which the honour of the existing representation was pledged already. The Irish Parliament refused for the present to allow Mr. Flood to alarm it. His amendment was rejected. His attempt to supplant Grattan in the confidence of the House of Commons by affectation of superior discernment was a decisive failure; and unable to endure the spectacle of his rival's triumph, and of the national exultation, which he had not been the instrument of producing, he left the country and went to England.

'His objects,' wrote Portland, 'are to me, and I believe to everyone else, a perfect secret. Although his character is so well known, I think it my duty to apprise the Cabinet of his arrival, and to give it, as my opinion, that his ambition is so immeasurable that no dependence can be placed upon any engagements which he may be induced to form.'<sup>1</sup>

Adoring friends took charge of his reputation in his absence. Beside the Duke's disparaging comments may be placed a sketch of Flood presented to an ungrateful House of Commons by Martin, the member for James Town.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Duke of Portland to Secretary Townshend, August 9, 1792.'  
S. P. O.

‘ Mr. Flood is the greatest character that has ever adorned this country ; a character not to be profaned by the tongue of impious men ; whose name will die only when our constitution expires, whose transcendent abilities will be handed down to posterity while the history of this planet shall be read ; the present adoration of this age, whose death will hereafter be lamented as the bitterest calamity with which an angry heaven has visited this island, whose transcendent merit is such that it keeps the merit of every other man at an awful and respectful distance, whose abilities are of such a godlike nature, that I protest, if ever I shall stand forward, the advocate of the present era, I shall do it by telling my son, if God shall ever bless me with a child, that the period in which I existed was preferable to that in which he may live, because I lived in the same era and had the honour to be born in the same country with that great man.’<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Flood had still nine years of public life before him, in which to show whether his admirers or his detractors had formed the clearer estimate of his character. Meantime a chapter of Irish history had been closed, a fresh page turned, and the floor swept clean for the opening of a new epoch. In July Lord Rockingham died. Fox and his immediate followers retired from the Cabinet ; and Shelburne became Prime Minister, with William Pitt for Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Duke of Portland having done his

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, 1782.

work was glad to leave the scene of his eventful labours, while the halcyon days of hope were still unclouded; and Lord Temple, who had married the heiress of the Nugents, and was then the representative of a great Irish house, was chosen for the first Viceroy of the emancipated Ireland.

## BOOK VII.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE CONVENTION.

##### SECTION I.

**M**R. GRATTAN had created a nation, but from the haste with which the infant had been brought to birth its limbs were half formed and its constitution critical. The Catholics recovered their civil <sup>1782</sup> rights, but Ireland was still politically Protestant. The connection with England was reduced to the tie of the common sovereign. The Irish Parliament claimed an independent power of legislation, external as well as internal. Was Ireland to have a separate foreign policy,<sup>1</sup> her own Ministers at foreign courts, her own consuls at the ports where she sold her merchandise? Was she to create a navy of her own to defend her interests on the high seas? Was she to

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Irish Parliament was, in fact, ambitious of having a voice in matters of peace or war, and hinted as much at the time when peace was made. "If," Lord North properly replied, "the King was to take the advice of the Irish Parliament in matters relating to war and peace, the utmost confusion must be the consequence." — 'Lord North to the Earl of Northington, November 3, 1783.' S. P. O.

maintain cruisers to protect her coasts from smugglers? Or if she was still to depend on the British navy, was she to contribute a specified sum to the support of it, or was she to be left always, as in the late session, to 'her own generosity?' Her incipient manufactures were said to require protection. Was she to be allowed to lay prohibitive duties on competing English goods, and if so, was England to be bound under the terms of the linen compact to exclude the linens of Russia and Germany from her markets, while she admitted the produce of the Irish looms duty-free? Again, was Ireland to have a share in the close trade of Great Britain with her colonies, while she refused Great Britain a voice in the terms on which the trade was to be carried on? These points and many others lay within the legislative limits which had been challenged by the Irish patriots. The constitution of 1782 would have possessed more vitality if the period of gestation had been prolonged till the statesmen of both countries had considered and provided for them. But the sanguine Irish temperament was impatient of delay. The opportunity was seized when patriotism was at fever heat. The favourable moment, once lost, might never have returned.

Nor was it only on the side of the relations with England that difficulties threatened to arise. The Dungannon resolutions had declared that the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland had alone a right to pass laws which Irishmen were bound to obey. Yet beside King, Lords, and Commons there existed still a



rival authority, created by the Irish people themselves, whose function it was to keep Parliament to its work. In the Phoenix Park were seen daily exercising the Artillery companies of an army which, being the representative of the national strength of Ireland, was, in its own opinion, the guardian of her liberties, the ultimate expression of the national mind, and only responsible to itself.

With the peace the excuse had ceased for the existence of the Volunteers. But the Volunteers showed no disposition to disband. When the session of 1782 ended, the number on the rolls was 130,000. There were, perhaps, 50,000 with the colours. The Volunteer army in theory was purely Protestant. Catholics were still forbidden to possess arms. But the Catholics had subscribed liberally, and in the general enthusiasm the opinions of the rank and file had not been looked into too curiously. Thus this singular body, which in the judgment of Irishmen was the wonder of mankind, and had raised their country to a level with the great military powers of Europe, had become what the Parliament was not—a substantially national institution, and possessed and preserved alone the confidence of the people.

The composition of the force deserves more particular notice. It had been raised by private subscription, or at the expense of enthusiastic individuals. There was no system of general finance; there were no stores, no arsenal, no commissariat. In the towns there were lawyers' corps, doctors' corps, shopkeepers' corps, mer-

chants' corps, artisan corps. The cavalry companies were mounted, officered, and accoutred by the country gentlemen from their household servants, farm-servants, and tenants, and the cost was provided by mortgages on their lands. It was said in Ireland that when the heir of an estate came of age money was raised to pay off encumbrances. The money was had and was spent, but from some cause the encumbrances remained. Light-hearted, extravagant, all living beyond their means, the gentlemen of Ireland had 'fewer cares than any people in the world.' 'Debt,' says Sir Jonah Barrington, 'gave new zest to the dissipation which created it.' Adored by their dependents, so long as they practised no economy and did not vex them with improvements or increase of rents, they lived from hand to mouth, taking no thought for the morrow; while the humblest peasant on the estate knew no law but the master's word, and was ready to defy in his name all the constables and bailiffs of the land. Out of such a following a Volunteer regiment was easily formed. A mortgage, more or less, mattered little, and with the prospect of the boundless wealth which was to flow into Ireland with the attainment of liberty, was regarded as a promising investment. Each gentleman vied with his neighbour in the splendour with which he could bring his corps to a review. Mounted squadrons wheeled and caracolled in all the hues of the birds of the tropics—green and scarlet, white and blue, gold and silver. Too curious enquiry may, perhaps, trace the last effects of the effervescence in the disappearance of many names

from the roll of the Irish gentry. The brief blaze of glory was extinguished in bankruptcy.

Lord Charlemont commanded in chief; the Duke of Leinster in his own province. Guards were mounted at the gates of these two noblemen. Escorts followed them in the streets. Sentinels stood at the doors of their boxes when they visited the theatres. Yet, with all this magnificence, the regiments could not be moved two days' march from their homes, and the functions which they combined of soldiers and politicians necessitated the placing persons in high commands who were fitter for debating clubs, than for the field. The colonel of the Phoenix Park Artillery Corps, for instance, was a Dublin ironmonger, named Napper Tandy, who had pushed himself into notoriety as the bullying demagogue of the corporation; small, ugly, ill-shaped, with no talent but for speech; a coward in action, a noisy fool in council. Homer had drawn Napper's portrait three thousand years before in 'Thersites.'

The corps officered by the gentry, too, might have been found wanting in time of trial for other causes.

Mr. Bagenal, an enthusiastic admirer of Grattan, had been among the most active promoters of the Volunteer movement. Beauchamp Bagenal was the 'Admirable Crichton' of his day—the preceptor and shining example of the rising generation of aspiring Irishmen.<sup>1</sup> He had inherited a large fortune. He had

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<sup>1</sup> He was the most notorious duellist of his day. He had called out De Blaquiere only to try his mettle. He occasionally submitted his younger friends to the same test. His relation and godson,

travelled in splendour on the Continent, had fought a prince, jilted a princess, run away with a Spanish duchess, broken into a convent in search of a nun, made the Doge of Venice drunk, and performed fifty other exploits no less extraordinary. When the Volunteers began to arm, none were more forward with help and encouragement than Beauchamp Bagenal. Jonah Barrington was present when he reviewed the Carlow and Kilkenny regiments in his park at Dunleckny. He drove between the lines in an open carriage with six horses, a bottle of claret in one hand and a glass in the other, drinking the officers' healths. The officers were called up singly to the side of the carriage, and were made to drain a tumbler of claret in turn to the Volunteers of Ireland. In the evening there was a ball and supper at the house. The rank and file for whom there was no room under the roof camped out in the summer night with unlimited wine and whisky; and in the morning the park was like a field of battle, strewn over with prostrate bodies, unable to move—'the most curious exhibition,' observes Sir Jonah, 'which could be

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Bagenal Harvey, who was hanged afterwards for treason, was once staying with him at his house at Dunleckny. The old gentleman took his guest out for a walk one morning in the park, fastened some absurd quarrel upon him, produced pistols, and forced him to fight. Bagenal Harvey, finding there was no escape, did the best that he could for himself, took a steady

aim, and sent a ball through Beauchamp Bagenal's coat. Instead of shooting at him in return, old Bagenal exclaimed, 'You damned young villain! you had like to have killed your godfather; yes, you dog, or your father, too, for anything I know to the contrary. I only wanted to see if you were brave. Go in, and order breakfast. I shall be at home directly.'

conceived by persons not accustomed to those days of dissipation.'

The existence of a large force, so constructed and so disciplined, was an awkward feature in a young Constitution, not the less so that the political self-confidence of the Volunteers was on a level with their estimate of themselves as soldiers; and that they were aware that, except for them, the Constitution would never have come into being. Business was at a standstill. The artisan had left his home, the farmer his fields, the lawyer his chambers—all to regenerate their country. They had no misgivings as to their own capacity, and they did not mean to go back to their ordinary callings till the country was regenerated to their minds. As Denis Daly expressed himself to Grattan—

'The Volunteers are ready to determine any question in the whole circle of the sciences which shall be proposed to them, and to burn any unfortunate person that doubts their infallibility.'

## SECTION II.

THE armed guardians of Irish liberty had occasion to be watchful. The Irish Parliament, in its first exuberance of gratitude, had voted 20,000 men <sup>1782</sup> for the naval service. On the conclusion of peace, many ships were put out of commission. The additional seamen were unneeded, and it was suggested that 5000 out of the whole number should be formed into regiments for service on land. The Argus-eyes of the Volunteers discovered in the proposal an insidious purpose of restoring the regular army to its full complement, as a step towards dispensing with their services. Lord Temple, who arrived at the Castle to find himself sitting on a volcano, was obliged to deprecate with the most passionate earnestness so dangerous a scheme.<sup>1</sup>

A people on the watch for treachery see malignant designs in the most innocent accidents. The first alarm had no sooner subsided, than a fresh aggression set the country in a flame. Irish causes, it had been agreed, were for the future to be decided in the Irish courts. An outstanding Irish case which had been long since carried by appeal to England, came on in the King's

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<sup>1</sup> 'I do not hesitate to assert that such a proposal, even if it was warranted by the terms of the vote—which, in fact, is not the case—would entirely annihilate every chance of raising a further body of men for the sea service. Lord Temple to Secretary Townshend. Secret and private. September 21, 1782.' S. P. O.

Bench in the Autumn Term of 1782, and Lord Mansfield gave judgment upon it. The Irish, who owed the recovery of their privileges to circumstances which no longer existed, were on the watch for symptoms  
 1783 that England meant again to enslave them. A people can afford to be calm who, in possession of their natural rights, feel that if assailed they can maintain them by force. The Irish had no such confidence. The Volunteers who had already taken Flood's side against Grattan on the insufficiency of the late concession, shrieked immediately that Ireland was betrayed.

Temple, in despair, appeared to share their suspicions. 'Having struggled,' he said, 'in resisting ideal grievances, I could not explain away this business. I do not wonder at the ferment into which all ranks of people are thrown. England is obliged by every tie of natural faith to complete a compact which is clearly incomplete.' Something, he insisted, must be done, and done instantly, to compose the alarm, even if an Act of Parliament had to be passed to annul Lord Mansfield's decision.<sup>1</sup> Innocent of the faintest design to disturb Ireland's peace of mind, Lord Shelburne's Cabinet professed its willingness to do whatever she desired. The judgment had been given on a case already before the English Court. The situation could not recur, for writs of error being no longer issued, no more cases could be referred. Yet whatever satisfaction Ireland demanded they were ready to give. The ad-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Temple to Secretary Townshend, November 20. Most secret.' S. P. O.

vanced patriots asked for Flood's Renunciation Bill. Flood's 'Renunciation Bill' they should have, and Mr. Townshend introduced a bill into the British Parliament for 'removing doubts' and affirming the final competence of the Irish Courts in all cases whatever,<sup>1</sup> William Grenville, Lord Temple's secretary, coming over to explain and support the Irish plea.

In both Houses during the passage of this Bill the position in which Ireland was placing herself was naturally remarked upon. Lord Aberdeen enquired whether the Irish tie was to be no more than the Hanoverian, or whether the Irish people were still subjects of the British Crown. If they were to be on the footing of the Hanoverians, they were aliens and could not sit in the British Legislature. A union was hinted at as the best solution of the problem, and though the Renunciation Bill was carried, it was carried against the opinions of Fox and of the Duke of Portland.

To smooth the ruffled waters and gratify the national vanity, Lord Temple instituted in March the new order of the Knights of St. Patrick. On the 17th, St. Patrick's Day, the leading members of the Irish aristocracy were installed with becoming magnificence. But the Volunteers were not to be caught with gilded chaff or compliments to the peerage. They had serious business still on hand. Lord Shelburne went out of office. The Coalition Government came in with Portland at its head, and Fox and North as joint Secretaries of State. The anomaly, in many ways absurd, was less mischievous as

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<sup>1</sup> 23 George III. cap. 28.



it affected Ireland, for Portland, who knew the secret history of the transactions of 1782, was resolute to give way no further. He saw that Temple was made of too soft material to deal successfully with an unreasonable people. He recalled him in spite of the outcry that he was taking away Ireland's friend, and Robert Henley, Earl of Northington, was sent in his place to open Parliament for the autumn session.

Under the Octennial Act, the Parliament elected July, in 1776 had still a year's life in it, but the alteration of the constitution had changed the relations between the Legislature and the Castle. Their increased independence enabled both Peers and Commoners to command higher terms for their support, and Lord Northington found on his arrival a general demand for a dissolution. The old system, it was very evident, was not only to continue, but to flourish with added vigour. Larger liberty among men who had not earned it by their own virtue meant, what, under such circumstances, it must always mean, larger folly and grosser corruption.

No disguise was attempted, no affectation of turning away the eyes, while the bribe was silently accepted. 'I am met,' Lord Northington wrote, 'with pretensions and claims of various natures which I would gladly have had more time to consider, to arrange the interests, satisfy the expectations of the claimants, and acquire the strength which Government ought to have at the opening of a new Parliament. I have no reason to feel much anxiety with regard to the strength which

is to be obtained by the support of considerable interests, as I have received flattering assurances of their good disposition.'<sup>1</sup>

In one quarter only, and where he had least looked for it, the Viceroy encountered difficulties. The boroughs belonging to the bishops the Castle had always regarded as Crown property, 'as providing opportunities of bringing into Parliament persons connected with the Government.' The new ideas of liberty had reached the Right Reverend Bench. The Bishops of Ferns and Ossory when applied to in the usual way answered 'that their seats were already disposed of.' Was the English lion so dead that even the bench could spurn at it? Northington wrote for instructions 'in so extraordinary a case.' 'Was he to signify to those prelates his majesty's disapprobation of their conduct?'

'The King is unwilling to interfere,' Lord North replied, 'but he agrees with your Excellency that it is extremely improper conduct.'<sup>2</sup>

A Parliament elected under the influence of lords and gentlemen who were seeking visibly their personal interests, was not likely to be satisfactory to Ireland in its existing state of inflation. There had been a bad harvest. The potato crop had failed; work of all kinds had been neglected in the mania for volunteering; and instead of a millennium, in spite of the Renunciation

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Northington to Lord North, July 1. Lord North to the Earl of Northington, July

<sup>2</sup> 'The Earl of Northington to Lord North, July 11, 1783.' S. P. O.

Bill, there was a prospect of absolute famine. The most mischievous consequence of a really unjust legislation, such as Ireland had suffered under before the removal of the trade restrictions, is that it teaches people to look to political changes as a sure remedy for what is amiss with them. Ireland had really no industrial grievance left. She needed only quiet and hard work to become as prosperous as Scotland or England. Political agitation was an easier, and, as the Irish believed, a more certain road to renovation. Pitt had begun to speak in England of a reform of Parliament. Ireland, too, began to talk of reforming her Parliament. The Constitution of '82 had been believed to be the crest of the mountain till it was achieved. From the brow of the ridge another peak had come into sight. All would not be well, indeed nothing would be well, without a free legislature and a free constitution. The Irish House of Commons was undoubtedly an absurd caricature. If Ireland was to be governed by a Parliament at all, it could not be other than a caricature, so long as the connection with England was maintained. The majority of the Irish people desired entire independence. An assembly which fairly represented them would reflect wishes which could be realized only by separation, and, therefore, any assembly calling itself representative must in a greater or less degree be an unreality so long as the connection with England continued. The privilege asserted and obtained for the Irish Parliament in the late changes made the retention of political power in the hands of those who were amen-

able to influence more than ever a constitutional necessity. To reform the House of Commons was avowedly to give power to those classes who demanded objects incompatible with dependence on the English Crown, to precipitate internal quarrels, and bring about either total separation or a forced incorporation in the Empire. The House as it stood was formed exclusively of Protestants. The experiment of an assembly composed of representatives of both creeds had been tried and had failed. The House was formed also almost exclusively of Protestants of the Established Church. The Presbyterians were not disfranchised, but their county influence was small, and in the boroughs the members were returned usually by the corporations from which they had been hitherto excluded by the Test Act. Two members sat for each of the 32 counties. The boroughs and cities returned 236. The county electors were free, subject only to the influence of the landowners. Sixty borough seats were partially free; *i. e.* the electors, if careless of consequences, might, by an effort, make an independent choice. A hundred and seventy-six seats out of the whole number of three hundred, were the property of bishops, peers, and commoners. They were bought and sold without disguise. The perpetual advowson (if the phrase may be used) of a borough was worth eight or nine thousand pounds. A single seat in a single Parliament could be had for 2000*l.*, and the purchaser avowedly intended to recoup himself by the sale of his vote. Under such a system the Volunteers discovered that the victory which they had achieved

was valueless. The Castle, with its patronage and its pension list, would always be too much for them. Accident had enabled them to obtain free trade and the free constitution, but the conditions favourable to them might never recur. The net would again close round them and they would be slaves once more. The Volunteers saw the danger to their liberties; experience had painfully taught them that England, if she recovered her authority, might again abuse it. And they were possessed with the flattering illusion which was pervading the air of Europe, that public virtue is not the parent of liberty, but its child; that to emancipate a people from control, and place the power of the State in their hands, was to raise their character to a level with their new duties, and unlock all the gates to them which led to prosperity and happiness.

There is no word in human language which so charms the ear as liberty. There is no word which so little pains have been taken to define, or which is used to express ideas more opposite. There is a liberty which is the liberty of a child or a savage, the liberty of animals, the vagrant liberty, which obeys no restraint, for it is conscious of no obligation. There is a liberty which arises from the subjugation of self and the control of circumstances, which consists in knowledge of what ought to be done, and a power to do it obtained by patient labour and discipline. The artisan or the artist learns in an apprenticeship under the guidance of others to conquer the difficulties of his profession. When the conquest is complete he is free. He has liberty—he

commands his tools, he commands his own faculties. He has become a master.

It is with life as a whole, as with the occupations into which life is divided. Those only are free *men* who have had patience to learn the conditions of a useful and honourable existence, who have overcome their own ignorance and their own selfishness, who have become masters of themselves.

The first liberty is the liberty of anarchy, which to a *man* should be a supreme object of detestation. The second liberty is the liberty of law, which has made the name the symbol of honour, and has made the thing the supreme object of desire. . But the enthusiasm for true liberty has in these modern times been transferred to its opposite. With a singular inversion of cause and effect, men have seen in liberty not the exercise and the reward of virtues which have been acquired under restraint, but some natural fountain, a draught from which is to operate as a spell for the regeneration of our nature. Freedom as they picture it to themselves is like air and light, a condition in which the seeds of excellence are alone able to germinate. Who is free? asked the ancient sage, and he answered his own question. 'The wise man who is master of himself.' Who is free? asks the modern liberal politician, and he answers, the man who has a voice in making the laws which he is expected to obey. Does the freedom of a painter consist in his having himself consented to the laws of perspective, and light and shade? That nation is the most free where the

laws, by whomsoever framed, correspond most nearly to the will of the Maker of the universe, by whom, and not by human suffrage, the code of rules is laid down for our obedience. That nation is most a slave which has ceased to believe that such divinely appointed laws exist, and will only be bound by the Acts which it places on its statute-book.

Considerations like these were too homely for the minds of practical politicians of the eighteenth century. The world was growing weary of its aristocracies. Political reform was the cry of the hour, and it must be allowed for the Irish enthusiasts that there was no country in Europe in which the ruling families had made a worse use of the power committed to them. The further the secrets of Irish administration are looked into the more uniform the spectacle; noble lords and gentlemen recruiting the fortunes which they had ruined in idle extravagance by selling their political influence, while their special duties as guardians of the law and rulers over their tenantry were not only undischarged, but not so much as known to exist.

Pitt was moving with his own ends. The Volunteers followed the example for theirs. Delegates met throughout the summer at Belfast and Lisburn. Schemes were sent out, and outlines of them scattered for approval through the southern provinces. The first convention at Dungannon had succeeded so brilliantly that a second was determined on, to be held at the same place on the 8th of September.

As a preparation for this meeting an address was

issued to the Volunteer army of Ulster. They were informed 'that the Imperial Crown of Ireland had been restored by their efforts to its original splendour, and the nation to its inherent rights as an independent State;' 'the distracted inhabitants had been united in an indissoluble bond through an unparalleled combination of the civil and military authority;' 'it now remained to abolish the courtly mercenaries who preyed on the vitals of public virtue, and prevent the return of venal majorities to support dishonourable measures.'

When September arrived the delegates came together, representatives of 270 companies; and this time, unprompted by Grattan, they set <sup>September.</sup> out of their own accord the symbol or formula of their new faith.

1. 'Freedom,' these philosophers had discovered, 'is the indefeasible right of Irishmen and Britons, derived from the Author of their being, of which no power on earth has a right to deprive them.' They did not say in what freedom consisted, or where, or in what way, God Almighty had bestowed it on them. They merely insisted on the fact as a preliminary article of faith.

2. 'Those only are free,' they went on, 'who are governed by no laws but those to which they assent either in person or by their representatives freely chosen.' If this was true, minorities who protest against laws passed by a majority are either entitled to disobey, or they are deprived of what the first resolution declared to be their inalienable right.

3. 'The elective franchise shall extend to those,



and those only, who will exercise it for the public good.' The elective franchise, by the old laws of Europe, belonged to the freemen: to those who in some practical department of life had proved their competence as masters of their craft. Who, on the principles of the Dungannon delegates, could decide on the fitness of the electors, or the meaning of the words public good?

Yet these propositions appeared to the soldier statesmen at Dungannon to be axioms which could form the basis of a revolution. By the light of them they framed a list of reforms which were required in the representation. Till these reforms were granted, they insisted on a refusal of the supplies by the House of Commons; and to hold the House of Commons to its work they concluded to choose delegates from the Volunteers of every county in Ireland, who should meet and sit in Dublin simultaneously with the Parliament—a second legislative assembly—to guide, and if necessary to control and overawe, the constitutional chambers.

Characteristic as these resolutions were in themselves, they were the more noteworthy from the persons with whom they originated. The leading spirits of the second meeting at Dungannon were Lord Charlemont and Lord Farnham, Sir Capel Molyneux, Colonel Stewart of Down,<sup>1</sup> the Bishop of Derry, Tom Conolly, and Colonel Montgomery. Noblemen and gentlemen of high character and station could deliberately recommend the constitution of a military convention to meet

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Marquis of Londonderry, and father of Lord Castle-reagh.

at the capital, and dictate measures to an unwilling Parliament in the name of the national army. They could even persuade themselves that they were engaged in a sacred service,<sup>1</sup> and they closed their proceedings with an appeal to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and with special thanks to his minister, the Bishop of Derry, the steady friend of Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> They described the convention 'as a solemn act of the Volunteer army of Ireland to demand rights without which the unanimated forms of a free government would be a curse, and existence cease to be a blessing.'

## SECTION III.

SATISFIED with the results of his communications with the patrons of the Irish boroughs, Lord North-  
 Sept. 1783 ington at first looked at the proceedings at  
 Dungannon with no serious alarm;<sup>1</sup> but he, too, like Temple, considered that concession of some kind must still be the rule. Annual Parliaments were desired, and, he thought, ought to be allowed. An absentee tax would be again proposed. This he hoped to defeat, but it was important to secure the confidence of Parliament by acquiescence in reasonable demands. The Irish sugar refiners persisted in asking for protection, and to Northington the choice seemed only to lie between moderate duties which would give them a fair profit, and duties so high as to exclude English competition. The silk and woollen manufacturers also asked for protection, and had powerful friends. The Viceroy hoped to be allowed to tell Parliament either that the Irish duties on English silks and woollens would be increased, or that the English duties on Irish silks and woollens would be lowered.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'A Parliamentary reform is the grand subject intended to be proposed by the delegation of the Volunteer corps. There can be little room for apprehension with regard to the fate of this question when | the present constitution of the House of Commons in this country is referred to.'—'The Earl of Northington to Lord North, September 23, 1783.' S. P. O.  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

These questions had been foreseen in England, and ought to have been provided for when the constitution of '82 was conceded. Ireland meant to retaliate for the restrictive duties, and the covenant of peace was to bear immediate fruits in fresh quarrels. Nor was an armed convention so light a thing as it appeared to Lord Northington. Mr. Fox, when he agreed reluctantly to let Grattan have his way, had determined to yield no further, even if the alternative was the abandonment of the island.

Nov.  
1783

In the prolonged existence of an armed force interfering with the Legislature, and owing no obedience to the executive government, he saw an anomaly pregnant with danger.

'The situation,' he said, in an elaborate and admirable letter to the Viceroy, 'is most critical. Unless the Volunteers dissolve in a reasonable time, Government, and even the name of it, must be at an end, and on the event of the present session of your Parliament the question will entirely depend. If you show firmness, and that firmness is seconded by the aristocracy and Parliament, their dissolution is a certain and not distant event; otherwise I reckon their government, or rather anarchy, as firmly established as such a thing is capable of being, but your government is certainly annihilated. I mean by firmness the determination not to be swayed in the slightest degree by the Volunteers, nor to attend to any petition that may come from them. The concessions made in the Duke of Portland's time were declared sufficient. The account must be

considered as closed, and must never again be opened on any pretence whatever. The firmness of the aristocracy will depend on the degree of it shown in the Castle. Peace is the natural period of Volunteers. If they are encouraged to enlist after this time, all is gone, and our connection with Ireland is worse than none at all. The Volunteers never were, depend upon it, so considerable as they were represented. If they are resisted, I am satisfied they will be defeated. If they are suffered to carry their points by timidity or acquiescence, it is as much over with English government in Ireland as if they had carried them by force. Ireland has more to fear from us than we from her. Her linen trade, which is her staple, depends entirely on the protection of this country. We cannot go on acquiescing in something new for the sake of pleasing Ireland. But, situated as you are among Irishmen—who, next to a job for themselves, love nothing so well as a job for their country—and hardly ever seeing anyone who talks to you soundly on our side of the question, it is next to impossible but that you must fall insensibly into Irish ideas.’<sup>1</sup>

The regular force in Ireland had been quietly restored to its normal complement. As there might be occasion for its services, Fox wrote at the same time to General Burgoyne, who was in command.

‘If,’ he said, ‘either the Parliamentary reform in any shape, however modified, or any other point claimed

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Mr. Fox to Lord Northington, November 1.’—Abridged. *Life of Grattan*, vol. iii. p. 106.

by the Volunteers be conceded, Ireland is irretrievably lost for ever. The question is whether the constitution which the Irish patriots are so proud of having established shall exist, or whether the Government shall be as purely military as it was under the Prætorian bands. If the Volunteers are baffled they must, in the nature of things, dissolve, or bring it to an immediate crisis, on the event of which, supposing Parliament to be silent, I do not believe you can entertain a serious apprehension. If they petition in the most humble strain it should make no difference. There can be but one measure either for dignity or safety, and that <sup>October,</sup> measure, from Sergeant Adair's reports, I am <sup>1783</sup> now led to hope could be taken. I mean a declaration against taking into consideration the request of persons met in arms in Dublin for the avowed purpose of obtaining their ends by force. It is a crisis, you may depend upon it. I believe that a proper spirit exerted now is the only possible chance of saving us from total separation or civil war, between which two evils I have not the firmness to choose.' <sup>1</sup>

In 1780 free trade was to have bound the two countries together for ever. In 1782 it was to be the repeal of the 6th of George I. and the new constitution. Now, when the ink was scarcely dry upon the parchment on which the Acts of Liberation had been enrolled, England and Ireland were further apart than before. The Irish Parliament had met before Fox's letter was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Fox to General Burgoyne, November 7.'—Abridged. *Life of Grattan*, vol. iii.

Oct. 14 written. The Viceroy had opened the session with a speech which said nothing. The address was carried without opposition, and also a vote of thanks to the Volunteers, whose convention was still three weeks distant. The stillness was not of very long duration. The question had to be tried in the new House of Commons which of the two competing champions for popular favour was the recognized leader of Irish patriotism. On the 28th Sir Henry Cavendish moved a resolution for a reduction of expenditure. Flood, whose mysterious mission to England had led to nothing, sprung to the front, and violently advocated a diminution of the military establishment. The meaning was obvious. A collision was possible between the Volunteers and the regular army. There were now 12,000 British troops in the island, and the Government might rely upon them to resist the dictation intended to be exercised.

Fox and Portland depended on Grattan to support them in their present difficulty. They had stood by him in his early struggles with Lord North. They had received distinct assurances from him that the concessions of '82 should not be followed by fresh demands, and had made themselves responsible to the British Parliament that Ireland would be satisfied. They expected him to assist them in resisting an alarming proposal pressed unconstitutionally by a body of men who had discovered their power, and were prepared to abuse it. Grattan knew their feelings, and recognized his obligations. He had himself once encouraged the Volunteers to interfere

with Parliament. It was on him that the duty rested of now bringing their presumption within bounds. He was himself an ardent reformer; but, enthusiastic as he was, he did not conceal from himself that in a country like Ireland a redistribution of political power, precipitated by the bayonets of the Volunteers, would lead to the wildest confusion. In spite of his good nature, he had resented the attempt of Flood to steal from him the laurels of the last campaign. He distrusted his rival's honesty. He did not respect his intellect.

Flood, whose manner was affected, had commenced his speech on the reduction of the army with an apology for an illness which did not appear to be serious. Grattan rose after him to oppose this motion. He would not occupy the time of the House, he said, with speaking of his personal infirmities. He reminded Flood that when he accepted office under Lord Harcourt, he had supported him in unbounded extravagance. At a time when England had acted justly and even generously towards Ireland, when she was still feeling the wounds of the late war, and comforting herself <sup>November</sup> with the belief that she had secured Ireland's friendship, he thought it inopportune, unbecoming, ungracious, to press upon her retrenchments in the army.

Grattan's conduct was signally creditable to him, for it was certain to be unpopular. Flood saw his advantage. Now was the time to make himself first in the affection of the Volunteers.

‘It requires but little candour,’ he said, ‘to make a nocturnal attack on my infirmity. I am not afraid of



the right honourable gentleman. I will meet him anywhere on any ground, by night or day. I would stand poorly in my own estimation and in my country's opinion if I did not stand far above him. I do not come dressed in a rich wardrobe of words to delude the people. I am not one who, after saying Parliament was a Parliament of prostitutes, made their voices subservient to my interest. I am not the mendicant patriot who was bought by my country for a sum of money, and then sold my country for prompt payment. I was never bought by the people, nor ever sold them. Give me leave to say if the gentleman enters often into this kind of colloquy he will not have much to boast of at the end of the session.

The Speaker did not interfere. The cries of 'Order!' if such cries were raised, were drowned in the applause of the little band who had resented the elevation of Grattan above their own idol. Flood, who had sued for the Castle livery, even under Lord Townshend; Flood, who had whined to Lord Harcourt that he had parted with his popularity to please him; Flood, whose vanity was dissatisfied with the best office in the Crown's gift, and now at last had only stepped to the front of the patriots when he found Portland would not be duped into restoring him to his seat in the Privy Council; Flood, of all public men in Ireland, could least afford to challenge a retrospect into his political history. Grattan, though his sins were many, had not deserved to be taunted with the name of mendicant patriot. If Grattan, in his reply, laid on the lash too heavily, never was chastisement

more wantonly provoked. He rose among the cheers of his friends in the House, and cheers and gibes mingled from the galleries.

‘I will suppose,’ he said—affecting at the outset to put a hypothetical case, but speedily dropping the effort and speaking directly at his antagonist—‘I will suppose a public character, a man not now in this House, but who formerly might have been. I will suppose it was his constant practice to abuse any man who differed from him, and to betray every man who trusted him. I will begin from his cradle, and divide his life into three stages. In the first he was intemperate, in the second corrupt, in the third seditious. Suppose him a great egotist, his honour equal to his oath, and I will stop him and say (here looking full at Flood) Sir, your talents are not so great as your life has been infamous. You were silent for years, and you were silent for money. When affairs of consequence to the nation were debating, you might be seen passing by these doors like a guilty spirit waiting for the moment of putting the question that you might hop in, and give your venal vote; or at times, with a vulgar brogue, aping the manners and affecting the infirmities of Lord Chatham, or like a kettledrummer lathering yourself into popularity to catch the vulgar. Or you might be seen hovering over the dome like an ill-omened bird of night, with sepulchral note, a cadaverous aspect, and broken beak, ready to stoop and pounce upon your prey. You can be trusted by no man. The people cannot trust you. The Ministers cannot trust you. You deal out the most

impartial treachery to both. You tell the nation it is ruined by other men, while it is sold by you. You fled from the embargo; you fled from the sugar bill. I therefore tell you, in the face of the country, before all the world, and to your beard, you are not an honest man.'

Those who have witnessed an Irish row in its wildest form may imagine the scene which followed. Floor and galleries were full, and every Irishman was on fire. Flood sate for a moment, as if stunned. He rose at last, stared about him, and stammered a few words which were lost in the tempest of noise. The Speaker, finally compelling some kind of silence, said that he had listened to the contest between two such distinguished men with inexpressible pain, and entreated Flood to sit down. Flood obeyed, and presently walked out. Grattan followed. Each consulted their friends, and a duel was arranged for the next morning. The Sergeant-at-Arms took them both into custody, and they were bound over to keep the peace. The storm, as brief as it was furious, died away; but a Parliament in which two leading members could rate each other like fishwomen was unlikely to command authority in Ireland, or confidence in the sister country.

## SECTION IV.

THE Cabinet had insisted that the Volunteer November,  
1783 convention should be encountered with firmness. They had even recommended that it should be prevented from meeting by force, if nothing else would serve. Lord Northington was a coward, and he had cowards all about him. The Volunteers had been twice thanked by the House of Commons as saviours of their country; they had been courted by Temple and flattered by Colonel Fitzpatrick. Not one member of the Privy Council could be found 'to advocate the idea of Government interfering to forbid the meeting.'<sup>1</sup>

On the 10th of November Dublin was to witness the presence of two rival representative assemblies, sitting one on each side of the river, and dividing between them the allegiance of Ireland. Every province had responded to the invitation to send deputies. Three hundred members had been chosen to match the number of the House of Commons, the moving spirit among them being the Bishop of Derry, otherwise known as Earl of Bristol, who had received the thanks of the Volunteers at Dungannon.

Frederick Augustus Hervey was the most singular representative of the class of bishops who had been chosen to preside over the spiritual destinies of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Northington to Mr. Fox, November 17, 1783.'

Irish people. He had been appointed during the short viceroyalty of his brother, and as long as the late earl lived he had been known only as an eccentric person of unepiscopal habits, who had built a vast palace in a wild corner of his diocese. The earl dying childless, the bishop succeeded to the title and a large fortune, and rather from love of excitement and vanity than from personal interest in Ireland, he assumed the character of a warlike prelate of the Middle Ages.

He was connected with the wildest blood in the country. George Robert Fitzgerald, of Turlow, near Castlebar, notorious, even in those reckless days, for his defiance of all laws, human and divine, was his sister's son, and commanded a regiment of Volunteers whom the bishop had raised, with a second regiment whom he had collected himself out of his vagabond dependents at Turlow. George Robert had ruled as absolutely among the bogs and mountains of Mayo as the MacWilliams of the days of Elizabeth and James. Like many of his countrymen who essentially resembled him, he showed little in his exterior of the real man. He was refined in manner, and soft and smooth of speech. He had travelled, and had rivalled Beauchamp Bagenal in the variety of his exploits and adventures; and he was so often in scrapes, from which only sword or pistol could extricate him, that he wore a chain-shirt under his clothes.<sup>1</sup> He had inherited his temper in his blood.

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<sup>1</sup> Dick Martin was counsel for the prosecution when George Robert was tried for ill-treating his father. Dick said the wretched father had indeed committed many crimes, the worst of them being that he had

His father had been a lawless ruffian. George Robert, thinking his father lived too long, shut him up for three years in a cave with a muzzled bear, and in this condition the old man was lying at the time of the Dublin convention.<sup>1</sup>

These two—the bishop and his nephew—were the principal figures in the scene. When the day came the whole city was out; the footways lined with armed Volunteers, the windows crowded with spectators. The Royal Exchange had been first thought of as the place of assembly. The Rotunda, at the top of Sackville Street, was substituted for the Exchange, as more central and convenient. Thither were streaming the deputies in uniform, the streets all ablaze with scarlet and green and gold and azure. Grenadier corps marched first, with Irish battle-axes and muskets slung across their shoulders. Behind the grenadiers came the delegates, two and two, in uniform, with side-arms, each wearing a green scarf. Then the barrister corps, brilliantly

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begotten the prisoner. George Robert glanced at him. 'Martin!' he said, 'you look very healthy. You take good care of your constitution; but, I tell you, you have this day taken very bad care of your life.' A duel followed. Fitzgerald's first shot missed. Martin, to make sure of his man, walked up, and touched his breast with his pistol before he fired. Fitzgerald staggered, from the force of the blow; but, to Martin's astonishment, turned round, drew

his second pistol, fired at, and hit him. The chain-shirt had stopped the ball.

<sup>1</sup> George Robert was hanged a few years after at Castlebar. He had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for some crime. The Marquis of Buckinghamshire pardoned him, after a few months' detention. He went down to Turlow, and immediately afterwards murdered one of his own people. For this offence he was tried, convicted, and finally hanged.

decked out with buttons, carrying for a motto, 'Vox populi suprema lex.' In the rear came Napper Tandy, with the Dublin artillery, the guns dressed out in ribands, each with a scroll about his muzzle, saying in conspicuous letters, 'Open thou our mouths, oh Lord, and our lips shall show forth thy praise.' The bishop himself entered Dublin with the state and manner of a monarch, as if he expected to be chosen King of Ireland. He sate in an open landau, drawn by six horses, magnificently apparelled in purple, with white gloves, gold-fringed, and gold tassels dangling from them, and buckles of diamonds on knee and shoe. His own mounted servants, in gorgeous liveries, attended on either side of his carriage. George Robert rode in front, with a squadron of dragoons in gold and scarlet uniforms, on the finest horses which could be bought in the land. A second squadron brought up the rear in equal splendour, and thus, with slow and regal pace, the procession passed on, Volunteers falling in, with bands playing and colours flying, the crowd shouting 'Long life to the bishop!' the bishop bowing to the crowd.

Passing through College Green, the right reverend earl paused at the door of the Parliament House. The dragoons halted. The trumpets were blown. The Lords and Commons, who had just finished prayers, came out to pay their respects, and gaze on the extraordinary scene. The bishop saluted; the bishop's guard presented arms; the band struck up the Volunteers' march, and having thus, as he supposed, produced a proper impression, the august being waved his hand.

The horses again moved ; the cavalcade swept on, amidst screams and shouts, past King William's statue, over the river, and up the broad line of Sackville Street. As the carriage approached the Rotunda, the artillery opened, and between the guns pealed wild hurrahs ; the delegates were entering the hall. The bishop passed in after them, to show himself, scattered condescending smiles and patronizing words of encouragement, and then retiring, to give them an opportunity of electing him, as he expected, to the chair, drove to his house, with the same state, to entertain the leading members of the assembly at a magnificent dinner.

Lord Northington meanwhile had not been idle. Though afraid to encounter the Volunteers with open resistance, he had known how to sow divisions among them, and they had come together predisposed to quarrel on elementary principles. All the delegates were for reform, all were members of the Established Church ; and among churchmen at least a moiety were determined Protestants. The Bishop of Derry and the extreme party were for Catholic emancipation and separation from England. Lord Charlemont and the country gentlemen who acted with him, though enthusiastic for 1782, and anxious for a more creditable Parliament, were not disposed to place themselves at the mercy of a numerical majority of Papists, or to run the risk of a repeal of the Act of Settlement. Both the Viceroy and Burgoyne had preferred diplomacy to force. They had discovered the line of division, and had judiciously operated on it ; and thus when, on the bishop's



departure, the election of chairman came on, the choice was found to have fallen, not on the right reverend English nobleman, but on Lord Charlemont. Successful so far, the Viceroy still feared that if the Catholic millions were roused to demand the suffrage, or if they were ever supposed to be anxious to obtain it, a majority in the Convention might yet press it upon Parliament; and he ventured on a manœuvre highly characteristic of his cunning, feeble nature. 'My plan,' he said, 'was by means of our friends in the assembly, to perplex its proceedings and create confusion.' Sir Boyle Roche, one of the delegates, a light, absurd person, declared in the convention on the second day of the meeting, that he was commissioned by Lord Kenmare to say that the Catholics did not wish to press their claims to the franchise, and disavowed a desire for an immediate alteration in their position. The support of the Catholics was vital to the success of the party of revolution. Sir Boyle's statement was received with confusion and astonishment. The Catholic committee in Dublin protested that he was not speaking for them. 'They did not differ so widely from the rest of mankind as by their own act to prevent the removal of their shackles.' The Bishop of Derry, their chief advocate and champion, was fierce in his denials. A day or two later there came a letter from Lord Kenmare himself, declaring with equal distinctness that he had given no authority for the use of his name.

Sir Boyle being called on to explain, gave a simple account of his performance. He had observed with

concern, he said, the court paid to the Catholics by a knot of factious politicians. They had been led to believe that the resolutions of the Convention were to be law, and that its first act was to be Catholic emancipation. He conceived the time had come when Lord Kenmare and the more respectable members of the Catholic communion should disavow these violent counsels. They were in the country, and could not be consulted; and supposing himself to be acquainted with their views, he had ventured to speak in their behalf.

Though he assumed the responsibility, there can be little doubt that he acted at the instigation of the Viceroy; and Northington may have felt justified by the deferential tone invariably adopted towards the Castle by the Catholic nobility. In any other country such an extraordinary piece of audacity might have had fatal consequences. In Ireland, strange to say, it succeeded. In the interval of uncertainty the Anti-Catholic party in the Convention had time to organize themselves. The exposure came too late. A committee was chosen to draw up the intended Reform Bill. The Bishop of Derry was excluded from it. Flood, who, with all his violence, was still opposed to the Catholic claims, affected illness, appeared, when forced to come forward, swathed in flannels, and talked mysteriously in broken sentences. The cry of the Church in danger was still powerful, even among the hot spirits in the Rotunda; and as the Reform Bill took shape, it became known that the admission of the Catholics to the franchise was not to form part of the scheme.

The danger, however, was not over. Beyond the Convention, there was still the Dublin mob. 'The country was full of disorder, madness, and inconsistency.'<sup>1</sup> The city swarmed with enthusiastic politicians, who unfortunately had muskets and cannon. The storm outside, if it raged with sufficient violence, might yet carry the Convention off its feet, and the Parliament was hesitating and frightened. George Robert Fitzgerald gave Convention banquets. The Bishop of Derry rode abroad daily with his escort of dragoons amidst adoring crowds. He called one day on Lord Charlemont at Marino.<sup>2</sup> 'Things are going well, my Lord,' he said, rubbing his hands. 'We shall have blood, my Lord, we shall have blood!' George Robert tried hard to gain Grattan. Finding Grattan cold, he invited him to dinner, and placed a band of ruffians in ambush to make short work of him. Grattan was saved by dining that evening at the Castle.

At length the crisis came. The Convention committee produced its bill, which Flood, who, like many other patriot members, had a seat both in the Rotunda and the House of Commons, was to introduce to Parliament. The Irish Constitution was on its trial. No matter how limited the present demands of the Convention, the principle was at stake. In which of the two assemblies sitting in Dublin lay the real power of legislating for Ireland? Flood was now at the height of his glory. In him, and no longer in Grattan, were

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Northington to Fox, November 17.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Charlemont's villa outside Dublin.

centred the hopes of Ireland's patriots. On November the 29th of November he rose to discharge his <sup>29</sup> task. The galleries were crowded with the fiercest of the mob. Dangerous-looking groups of ruffians lounged about the doors. Conscious of the danger of scattering fire in the midst of such combustible material, Flood was in manner studiously quiet, and the matter of what he proposed was moderate. The franchise in city or borough was to be confined to Protestant freeholders and leaseholders. The close boroughs, whose representatives were at present returned by the Corporations, were to be abolished; and members were to swear, on taking their seats, that they had used no corrupt means to obtain them. Colonel Brownlow seconded the motion, and then Yelverton, who was now Attorney-General, rose for the Government.

No suspicion could rest on the patriotism of Yelverton, who had carried the modifications of Poyning's Act. He refused to enter into the merits of the Bill. It was sufficient for him that it originated with a body of armed men external to the House.

'We sit not here,' he said, 'to register the edicts of another Assembly, or receive propositions at the point of the bayonet. When the Volunteers form themselves into a debating society, and with that rude instrument, the bayonet, probe and explore the Constitution, my respect for them is destroyed. It is vain, whatever be pretended, to shut our eyes to what every one has seen and heard—armed men walking bareheaded through the streets under a military escort, courting the smiles

of the multitude, meeting in that Pantheon of divinities the Rotunda, forming committees and sub-committees, receiving reports and petitions, and going through the mockery of a Parliament. . . . Is this a time to alter the Constitution? Will the armed associations, wise as they may be, be able to form a better? Before they have for a single Session entered on the enjoyment of it, like children they throw away the bauble for which, with the eagerness of infantine caprice, they have struggled. I say to the Volunteers, you shall not throw from you the blessings which you possess. Cultivate your prosperity. Enjoy the fruits of your virtue. Beat your swords into ploughshares. Return to your occupations. Leave legislation in those hands in which the laws have placed it. . . . Our preservation depends on the vote we shall now give. We are on a precipice. To recede a step more plunges us into ruin.'

The debate which followed was said to be the hottest ever heard within the walls of the Irish House of Commons. Hely Hutchinson, Scott, Conolly, William Ponsoby, Bowes Daly, and Sir John Parnell spoke for the Government. Grattan, notwithstanding George Robert's designs on him, and though he was supporting Flood, remained true to his general principles. He approved of Reform, and he said so. Curran, who had just entered Parliament, and sate with Flood for the borough of Kilbeggan,<sup>1</sup> made his maiden speech on the same side. He said little; but that little was clear, and to

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<sup>1</sup> Nearly all the patriots in the Irish Parliament sate for close boroughs—so opposite was fact to theory.

the purpose. Flood declared that 'the honour of the peerage might be obtained by any ruffian who possessed borough interest.' Bowes Daly told the Volunteers in rejoinder that they were rushing on destruction; 'there was a turbulent demagogue among them who was urging them to their disgrace.' As the storm raved louder, passion grew more careless in its language, and at last Flood exclaimed, that 'if the conduct of the House that night should create dissatisfaction in the Volunteers, that body and the Parliament might be committed against each other, and the public peace be disturbed.'

Here at last was a threat, and now Fitzgibbon rose to show for the first time of what stuff he was made. Once already he had startled the propriety of the House by moving, when they were flattering the Volunteers, for the production of a censure which had been passed upon that body but a few months before. He had withdrawn his motion, and they had forgotten him. They were not likely to forget him any more.

He was a small, delicately-made man, with a handsome oval face, a bold grey eye, a manner so haughty that patriot members complained of his intolerable insolence. His father's death left him in possession of the estate in Limerick, with seven thousand a year, independent of his practice at the bar. He was the most just, as well as the most determined, of landlords; and he was loved and trusted by his tenants as profoundly as he was afterwards hated by demagogues and agitators. His speech in this memorable debate was a

declaration of purpose, an intimation clearly expressed to friend and foe of the part which he meant to play in the politics of Ireland. His father had trained him in an honourable contempt for the devices by which the Castle authority had been sustained.<sup>1</sup> He had supported the popular cause against England when he considered Ireland was asking her due, careless what Viceroys thought of him. He had fought on the other side against extravagant demands, indifferent to the clamours of the patriots. He had sought for no preferment. Preferment was now seeking him. He was already named for Attorney-General on the approaching promotion of Yelverton to the place of Chief Baron, but he maintained his personal independence, and neither spoke nor voted but according to his own conviction. He rose at the close of the debate, and began by sketching the origin of the Reform movement, tracing it to a democratic society in England, and thence to corresponding associations at Belfast. He alluded to the first resolutions at Dungannon, and pointed to the Rotunda convention as the result of having submitted to the Volunteers' dictation. Then, coming to the point, he said—

‘I do not oppose the introduction of this Bill because it is replete with absurdities. I oppose it because it comes to us under the mandate of a military congress. Gentlemen say it is dangerous to commit the Parliament and the Volunteers. I know it is dangerous.

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<sup>1</sup> Old Fitzgibbon once said of the Pension List, ‘I have read that the wages of sin is death. Now-a-days the wages of sin is Ireland.’

I know the man that does it should answer for the crime with his head. But I know the force of the law is sufficient to crush them to atoms; and for one, I say, I do not think life worth having at the will of an armed demagogue. If ever there was an occasion that called on every man possessing one sentiment of liberty to exert it in defence of the Constitution, it is this, it is the present, which calls on us to spurn this Bill away. There is a circumstance of idle babble gone forth which only could have issued from the cells of Bedlam—that if this Bill is rejected some wretched fool will refuse to pay taxes. I have also heard that a House of Parliament is to be built at Dungannon, and that we are to have annual sessions of conventions to regulate the business of the nation. Gentlemen may call this liberty if they please. I call it the worst kind of tyranny. To put at end to it at once, I am for rejecting the motion for leave to introduce a Bill.'

Yelverton had spoken with dignity. Fitzgibbon spoke in a tone peculiar, and perhaps unexampled, in the country to which he belonged. There had grown out of the Irish race by some freak of nature a man who had no personal object of his own which he wished to serve, who detested anarchy, who despised as well as detested the cant which passed under the name of patriotism, who combined with high intellectual power the most dauntless personal courage.

Well Fitzgibbon knew that Irish sedition would never forgive his words. Amidst yells and sarcasms from House and gallery the division was taken, and



leave to introduce the Bill was refused by a majority of two to one.<sup>1</sup>

Following up his success, as a further lesson to the Prætorians at the Rotunda, Yelverton then moved 'that it is now necessary to declare that this House will maintain its rights and privileges against all encroachments.' This, too, was carried by an equally large majority, and at once the danger was over. As invariably happens in Ireland, the spectre of rebellion has but to be boldly confronted to fade and disappear. General Burgoyne had taken precautions to preserve the peace of the city. The Volunteers did not care to measure strength with him.

The Convention had remained in session till the result of the first division was known. It was a Saturday night. Lord Charlemont, who was in the chair, moved that they should adjourn till Monday. On Monday morning the delegates re-assembled, and a Captain Moore rose to complain of the insults which had been passed upon them by Fitzgibbon. Lord Charlemont at once flattered the assembly and stopped the discussion by telling Moore he was out of order in alluding to what had passed in another place. At the Bishop of Derry's request, Flood then described the reception and the fate of their Bill in the House of Commons. Earnestly deprecating violence, he proposed that there should be an address from the Irish nation to the King, which he offered himself to present; and then mildly and innocently the great Convention, ushered

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<sup>1</sup> 157 to 77.

into existence amidst the thunders of cannon to command the destinies of Ireland, adjourned *sine die* and closed its vainglorious career.

The Bishop of Derry only was unable to sit down under his defeat. Delivered from irresolute companions, and now unchallenged chief of the Volunteers, 'the Bishop,' it was said, 'rose like a phoenix out of the ashes of the Convention.' This absurd person still clung to the dream of a separate Ireland of which he was to be King, and his admirers in the North fooled him to the top of his bent. On his return to Ulster 'the Bill of Rights Battalion' presented him with an address under arms. They said they had seen with indignation the treatment of their delegates. 'They hoped still, under the auspices of his lordship, to cleanse the Augean stable, those noisome stalls of venality and corruption in Parliament.' The Bishop replied that 'the spirit of freedom, like a Promethean fire, was now animating the lifeless mass of Irishmen.' He appealed to the Catholics. He appealed to the Americanized Presbyterians. 'These respectable citizens,' he said, 'were far more numerous than their oppressors.' 'They had crouched hitherto under the iron rod from a dread of wounding their country through the side of their tyrants.' 'Gentlemen of the Bill of Rights Battalion,' he concluded, 'I summon you to consistency. Tyranny is not Government, and allegiance is due only to protection.'

The Battalion swore they would support their Constitution, or be buried under its ruins. Last, strangest,

and most grotesque feature in the history of the Irish Volunteers! The emancipators of their country chose for their favourite leader a British Earl and a Bishop of the Irish Established Church.

## SECTION V.

THE shadowy giant of the Convention having faded into vapour, the Parliament, relieved of its presence, proceeded with its ordinary work. In December, 1783, December, Mr. Molyneux moved once more the threatened Absentee Tax of four shillings in the pound on all rents remitted out of the kingdom to non-resident landowners. A free Irish Legislature, alive to the real causes of Ireland's misfortunes, would have welcomed a measure which had been almost carried in the days of its bondage. In the pursuit of imaginary triumphs her politicians had lost the power of recognizing their real foe. Northington had doubtless been at work under the surface. There was a cry that such a tax would lower the value of lands—that it would divide the countries now so happily united. Sir John Blaquiere reminded the House of the circumstances under which an Absentee Tax had been proposed when he was himself Secretary. 'Every voice had been at first in its favour. He went himself to England to solicit it as a boon from Lord North's Cabinet. He urged his suit indecently, he said, and with unbecoming importunity, and had wrung from his chiefs a reluctant consent. He returned full of joy to propose it as a Government measure, and the gentlemen who had been so eager turned their backs on him. He had divided in a minority of 14.'

It appeared that the Constitution of '82 had reconciled the patriots to this their deepest grievance. The minority of 14 became now a minority of 192. The Absentee Tax was rejected by 184 votes to 22.

The autumn session wound up with the passing of the Supply Bills. The Coalition Ministry in England was dissolved, and Pitt came to the helm to compose the crisis which had been provoked by the American disaster. Northington, who had made himself popular in Ireland, was invited to remain, but declined, and the young Duke of Rutland, then only 29 years old, who died too soon to display qualities in a larger sphere which might have given him a place in the history of the empire, came over to serve his political apprenticeship as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. The excitement of '82 was over. The Convention had alarmed the timidity and disgusted the intelligence of the higher classes, and with the Duke, 'the enemies of Irish liberty,' as they are termed in patriotic histories, came back into power. Yelverton was made Chief Baron and Lord Avonmore. Scott became Chief Justice and Earl of Clonmel. Fitzgibbon as Attorney-General was the ruling spirit in the practical Administration. The revenue was still short of the expenditure. Three hundred thousand pounds had been borrowed to meet the now constant deficit. A bad harvest and the Volunteer insanity had injured trade, and the artisans of Dublin were out of work, starving and mutinous. The exasperation against British soldiers had been aggravated by the failure of the Convention. General Luttrell had to inform the

House of Commons that 'there was now practised in Ireland, in the 18th century, a cruelty that would have astonished the barbarians of the 14th—the practice of houghing men for no reason but that they were soldiers, by ruffians whose qualities were a strong arm, a sharp knife, and a hard heart.' The soldiers had the passions of men. It was not yet understood that Ireland was to be ruled by conciliation, and that their business was to submit. In some instances they had done justice to themselves. So many men of the 49th had been hamstrung that the regiment had been ordered out of Dublin, for fear they might inflict some frightful retribution on the mob who were in league to protect their assailants.

The Viceroy loitered in London after his appointment. The Christmas recess was prolonged, February, and members anxious to be busy complained of 1784 'the suspension of Irish business on account of a squabble of gentlemen in England for places.' He came at last at the end of February. Complimentary addresses were presented by both Houses, not indeed without signs of opposition. The Duke of Leinster had told Lord Mornington that he would give no support to Mr. Pitt's Administration, but the opposition was merely the revival of the traditional system. The Viceroy hoped to have conciliated sufficient support by announcing that English politics were not to affect the conduct of Irish Government. But this was not what had been meant at all. He had to report 'that Government influence would be reduced to nothing *unless security could be given by very high terms indeed that particular*

persons should be benefited without being liable to disappointment in case of new changes of Administration.' <sup>1</sup> Mr. Orde, <sup>2</sup> who came as Secretary, wrote that 'he was almost distracted with the infinite numbers and variety  
 March, of applicants for favour, who had all long stories  
 17<sup>o</sup>4 to tell. The patronage of Ireland would not suffice for one day's short allowance, if all who crowded into the ship were to be fed.' <sup>3</sup> The hungry applicants were rationed so far as the Government resources extended. Those who were left out were soothed by promises. The crew at last fell into their places, and the vessel was once more under way. The Duke was able to mention as 'one great cause of confidence the effect of what was passing out of doors upon the minds of almost every person of property and understanding who considered the stake they had to venture, and who could not look to any so sure protection as that of his majesty's Government.' <sup>4</sup>

The first business which came before Parliament was the 'houghing.' Luttrell, himself a soldier, told the story. The perpetrators of these atrocious acts were protected by the public opinion of their class, and had not been brought to justice. He introduced and carried a bill, to oblige the barony where such a crime had been committed, to provide a pension of 20*l.* a year for the maintenance of the disabled soldier, so long as

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, February 27. Secret.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> Created afterwards Lord Bolton.

<sup>3</sup> 'Mr. Orde to —, March 3, 1784.' S. P. O.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, February 27, 1784.' S. P. O.

the criminal remained undetected. A second clause provided that, in case of conviction, these wretches should be executed within two days of their sentence, and should be fed in the interval with bread and water.<sup>1</sup>

The phenomenon was repeating itself which has appeared with invariable sequence in Irish history. The hatred against England was increasing with each concession to popular demands, and fresh severity was required to prevent the mischievous consequences of those healing measures, which had been represented as the certain grounds of future peace and good will.

The Reform question, though its back was broken, was not dead. The Bishop of Derry was still haranguing the Ulster mobs. Flood had carried over and presented the address to the King. He had received no answer, and was about to try his bill a second time in Parliament. It had been rejected in November, on the ground that it was forced on the House by intimidation. The Convention being dissolved, it could be now received and debated on its merits. Flood himself was frightened at the spirit which was abroad, and was only anxious to be decently quit of his responsibilities. Leave was given this time for the introduction of the bill, the Duke calculating on being able to defeat it by a heavier majority on a second reading than he could have commanded for a refusal of admission. Thus he hoped that by moderation 'a question so unpleasant and distressing in the present circumstances of the

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<sup>1</sup> 23, 24 George III. cap. 56.



kingdom would be more effectually quashed; and without unnecessary irritation to the feelings and prejudices of certain persons who stood forward in support of the measure.'<sup>1</sup>

The debate, when the second reading came on, was long and tedious. The fire had been expended in November. There was now only the smouldering of damp and ashes. Sir Boyle Roche said that the extension of the suffrage to Protestant leaseholders would lead to the expulsion of the Catholic tenantry to make room for them. Grattan spoke again for the principle of reform, and defended the Volunteers. The discussion dragged on till four in the morning, but with the languor attaching to a cause which was consciously lost. The division, when it came,<sup>2</sup> was decisive of the prospects of the question, so long as the present Parliament continued, or was protected from intimidation.

Far away, notwithstanding, was the halcyon period which Rutland anticipated. Submission to the Duggannon resolutions in '82 had been a fatal encouragement to perseverance in sedition

Maddened at the defeat of the bill, which they had been taught to regard as the door that opened into Paradise, the Dublin populace howled and stormed. The Bishop of Derry set himself to raise new corps of Volunteers in the North. The Viceroy, at Fitzgibbon's advice, sent down officers in disguise to watch him, with a warrant in their pockets should an arrest

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<sup>1</sup> 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, March 17. Secret.'

<sup>2</sup> 159 to 85.

be necessary.<sup>1</sup> But there was a more immediate and more serious danger. The Reform Bill gone, the patriots struck upon a course more certain to set Dublin in a flame, and introduced resolutions for the protection of Irish manufactures. Free trade they now called a mockery. The people were still starving in the streets; the country was as poor as before. Perfidious England, when it gave free trade to Ireland, knew well that it was giving her a useless bauble. 'It was like opening the veins of a wretch expiring with hunger. There was not on the face of the earth a race of men so abject as the Irish; not the Esquimaux in North America, not the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope; and the cause was the injustice of the laws. Irish manufactures required protection, and must have it.'

Such were the arguments—echoes of the cries out of doors—addressed to the Parliament. The Par-  
liament for the present was not convinced, and the April, 1784  
resolutions were heavily defeated. The vote filled the measure of popular indignation. Handbills were sent out to rally the friends of Irish liberty. The Mayor of Dublin was called on to take measures to preserve peace. The Mayor of Dublin, true to the traditions of his office, refused. The mob gathered at the doors of the Parliament House. They thronged the passages. They

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<sup>1</sup> This singular prelate ran a near chance of ending his career on the gallows. 'I shall be much concerned,' the Duke wrote, 'to find myself obliged to proceed to extremities, and take a step which may occasion any ferment; but I think it essential that an example should be made among the abettors of sedition, if such there be.'—'To Lord Sydney, March 17. Secret.'

filled the bar and gallery, and from the gallery they marked unpopular members, and threatened them with death. The patriot newspapers preached assassination. The leading articles 'were essays in praise of murder, investigating the different means by which it might be perpetrated, preferring the poignard as the most certain and least dangerous to the assassin.'<sup>1</sup> Fitzgibbon said he had a man arrested who had conspired with others 'to kill seven members of the House of Commons, he himself having the honour to be one.' The murderers were to receive a hundred pounds apiece; and it had been agreed that if either of the seven who had been named escaped, 'any other of the majority who had voted against the protecting duties might be taken instead.'<sup>2</sup> Even Grattan admitted that the Press teemed daily with such atrocious matter as would not be suffered in any other country.

Again the Mayor was called on to arrest the publishers and printers of these papers. He complained so languidly, and handled the offenders so gently, that the Serjeant-at-Arms was sent with a guard of soldiers to take them out of his hands. The soldiers went to work more roughly than the city officials, and the air rung with shrieks of indignant patriots over the wrongs of their suffering comrades.

In the midst of these scenes the unfortunate Constitution was overtaken by a calamity. The reader will

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<sup>1</sup> Speech of General Luttrell, April 12, 1784.—*Irish Debates*.

<sup>2</sup> *Irish Debates*. Ibid.

remember the battle over the Writs of Error and the Irish appeals, and the earnestness with which Ireland had insisted on her right to give final judgment in her own causes. The value of the privilege was to be illustrated in the very first appeal which was brought before the Irish House of Lords. A large property was at stake. The suit lay between a member of the Loftus family and a Mr. Rochford. Judgment had been given in the Court of King's Bench for Mr. Loftus; but the Judges were divided, and the case came on for hearing before the Peers. Opinion was so nicely balanced that votes were of consequence. Lord Strangford, a clergyman and Dean of Derry, who for forty years had been a pensioner on the Irish Establishment, conceived that a court of justice was like the Legislature, and that a vote in one as well as the other was convertible into money. He applied to Mr. Rochford in general terms for assistance in his distressed circumstances. Mr. Rochford excusing himself, Lord Strangford wrote again to him, saying that he was anxious to make himself acquainted with the merits of the pending cause, but was unable through poverty to attend at the House. Alluding to his first request for help, he said 'that probably since that time Mr. Rochford's rents had been more punctually paid;' and 'he was encouraged by that consideration to renew a request which might be productive of too many advantages to enumerate.' 'Two hundred pounds would fix him in a most enviable situation. One hundred pounds would enable him, by daily appearance, to express his gratitude where he

flattered himself to see success crown the undertaking.'<sup>1</sup>

Rochford forwarded this remarkable production to the Chancellor. It was produced and read in the House of Lords, and their Lordships may have doubted whether they were wholly worthy of the boon which Grattan had procured for them. 'A general alarm was felt for the safety of property.'<sup>2</sup> Strangford was ordered to attend at the bar of the House, where the Viceroy hoped 'he would be proceeded against with the rigour which so notorious an act of corruption and dishonour deserved.' Not appearing, he was taken into custody by the Black Rod. He admitted his letter, though protesting that he had meant no harm. The Lords thought otherwise, and an Act was passed disabling the miserable old man from voting or sitting as a Peer of Parliament thenceforward.

It was a bad case, and Strangford had sinned in being found out. Yet he was but tainted a shade more deeply than his judges, and in the same series of letters which tell the story of his delinquency the Duke said that throughout the session the Government had been encountered by a petty embarrassing opposition in the House of Lords; that the meaning of it 'was to enhance their importance and make the Peers' pretensions the first object in the distribution of emoluments and honours.' 'The Peers,' he wrote in a 'most secret'

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Strangford to Mr. Rochford, January 10, 1784.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, April 12, 1784.' S. P. O.

despatch of the 19th of April, 'under the new Constitution have more power than before. Greater attention, therefore, and more expensive influence will be required if we mean to direct its progress in the right way.' 'A share in the lucrative favours of Government must be set aside for the purpose of gaining attachments in that House, as the invention of mere external allurements will no longer maintain the influence which they may for the moment acquire.'

'I must observe also,' the Duke continued in the same letter, 'upon the scantiness of the provision which is at the disposal of Government for the support of an increased and increasing number of claimants. I must therefore represent the necessity of taking some measure as early as possible for the enlargement of our means. It will be absolutely incumbent on me to endeavour to establish in the House of Lords the strongest and most immediate connection with a certain number of powerful members who may be at all times looked to, and may be depended upon for the fidelity and firmness with which they will execute their trust.'<sup>1</sup>

Entering into further details, he said that the Duke of Leinster, though still in opposition to Pitt, was willing to come to terms. Lord Mornington<sup>2</sup> 'was disposed to take a leading part in favour of administration.' Lord Hillsborough promised well. Lord Shannon made 'fair professions,' which were not clogged so far 'with

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord Sydney, April 19, 1784.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Marquis Wellesley.

unreasonable demands in favour of his friends and extensive Parliamentary connections.' Lord Clifden was willing to support Government, 'but not without a steady view to his object—an official establishment for his second son.' His brother, the Archbishop of Cashel, acted on the same principles, and 'did not lose sight of the Primacy or the See of Dublin.' To meet so many pretensions, the Duke wished to create some new offices which might be objects of ambition to the great Peers—a Presidency of the Council; a Privy Seal, with rank; a Speakership of the House of Lords, distinct from the office of Chancellor — if salaries could be found for them without adding new burdens to the Establishment.

Passing from Peers to Commoners, the Duke said that 'the Provost, who had always some object in view, and whose objects were not generally marked with the character of moderation and humility,' desired that Mr. Rigby should be induced to retire, and that he might have the Mastership of the Rolls. John Ponsonby would give his services, 'provided his terms were acceded to,' 'He demanded the office of Secretary of State for life for his son,' 'a thing not to be acquiesced in;' but as his influence was great, the Duke was disposed to let his son have the Post-Office, to give a Peerage to his son-in-law, Mr. O'Callaghan,<sup>1</sup> and 'to make some inferior arrangements to gratify his numerous dependents.' Mr. Loftus, too, might be counted on. 'His views ex-

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<sup>1</sup> Created Lord Lismore

tended to a Peerage,' and he had received a promise of it on condition of his surrendering his pension. This pension, having lost his cause with Mr. Rochford, 'he was unwilling to relinquish,' and it would be necessary to allow him to keep it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, March 26. Most secret.'  
S. P. O.



## SECTION VI.

1784 To lift the curtain which hides the working of the Irish Government is to see the condemnation of it written as by a handwriting on the wall. Well might Irishmen demand Reform. Never did system saturated with corruption need it more. But it did not occur to them that if Reform was to be effectual, each one of them must begin with a reform of his own heart. The Parliament was corrupt because Lords and Commons were only influenced by base motives. If England had refused to bribe them, the same men would have followed their interest in other ways, to their own and their country's still more fatal injury. So long as they remained unworthy of freedom, the only reform which would have benefited them would have been the suspension of their powers of self-government. And yet the blame did not rest wholly with the Irish. The least heeded yet not the least mischievous effect of misgovernment is the character which it generates alike in the rulers and the ruled. Centuries of injustice and neglect had divided the Irish nation into a proletariat, to whom law was synonymous with tyranny, and into an aristocracy and gentry who, deprived of the natural inducements to honourable energy, lived only for idle amusement, and used political power as a means of recruiting their exchequer. After the Revolution of 1688 Ireland was as a garden with the soil newly turned, in

which England might have planted what herbs she pleased. She had let the opportunity pass. The native weeds had been allowed once more to grow, and in this condition Irish politicians, who saw the misery but were too vain to understand its causes, had been enabled by circumstances to snatch an instalment of Home Rule. In this condition there were but two alternatives before the English Cabinet—either to buy the support of the aristocracy, who threatened otherwise to make government impossible, or else to fall back upon the people, to level the old barriers, lay open the imposthume, and appeal to a genuine representation freely chosen by the popular voice. Let those sanguine persons who believe most firmly in the regenerative virtues of ballot-boxes and polling-booths reflect calmly on the condition of the country, and affirm afterwards, if they can, that the second experiment ought to have been ventured. A Protestant minority owned the soil. The Catholics, from whom it had been taken by force, still believed themselves to be its rightful possessors. The Protestants were split into Churchmen and Dissenters. The Churchmen had the pride and passion of a long-privileged class. The Dissenters were republicans, inflamed by injury and kindled into fervour and enthusiasm by the successful revolt of America. The inflammable temperament of the people led them always to choose their leaders among demagogues and incendiaries. Over every province were scattered armed regiments owning no authority, and possessed with the conviction that the sole obstacle to Irish happiness was the connection with

England; while the entire population, whom it was sought to enfranchise, was intoxicated with that most dangerous of illusions, that the misery of the country was due entirely to political causes, and was deliberately caused by the persevering malice of their rulers.

To have let loose the torrent must have precipitated a furious revolution. To maintain order and authority by existing methods was to lend the countenance of the Crown to corruption of which the reality was probably worse than even the imagination of the patriots could conceive; and that the choice now lay between two courses alike if not equally detestable was a disgrace to the superior country, whose neglect was the cause of the condition into which the Irish colony had fallen. England, of course, selected to drag on through the slough till circumstances might open some third way of escape. Corruption, however, was employed thenceforward, not to bolster up iniquitous laws, or resist measures which promised real advantage, but to bribe the Irish gentry to save their country from being dissolved in anarchy. Wrought as they had been by the Convention into wild expectation, the mob, in Dublin especially, were savage in their disappointment. The presence of a British garrison alone prevented insurrection. Parliament was prorogued prematurely to leave the executive free, and the executive needed all its courage for the work which it had to do. The distress in the city was real and frightful. Fifty thousand artisans were out of work and starving, and were taught to believe that the cause was the refusal of the protection duties. The Act of Parliament

and the threat of military law stopped the houghing of the soldiers, but other forms of outrage took its place, copied from a Transatlantic pattern. A tarring and feathering committee was established in Dublin: obnoxious citizens were dragged from their beds, stripped naked, smeared with pitch, and rolled in goose-down, and so turned into the streets. The Press, which had been checked for the moment by the persecu-<sup>May, 1784</sup>tions, became as violent as before, and the Government discovered as a fresh and still more alarming symptom 'that most of the abominable letters and paragraphs were written by Popish priests.' The Catholic bishops were 'most earnest to express and manifest their reprobation of such excesses,' and offered assistance in detecting and convicting the writers.<sup>1</sup> Their service was accepted gladly, but little came of it. The Corporation was governed by Napper Tandy, who continued at the head of the Volunteer artillery, and had possession of their guns. The magistrates were cowardly, or themselves sympathized with the agitators. Reilly, the High Sheriff of Dublin, called a meeting of citizens on the 7th of June, where resolutions were passed that the constitution of Parliament was unbearable, that the people must have a share in the representation, and that the Catholics must have the franchise; that a venal and corrupt House of Commons had treated the demands of Ireland with indignity and contempt; that under the Constitution of '82 any administration could have a majority, and that there was danger of absolute

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, April 30. Most private.' S. P. O.

monarchy. A committee was chosen to consider the steps which ought to be taken. The committee reported, in the name of an injured and insulted kingdom, that their liberties were insecure, that their chartered rights had been infringed, and the freedom of the Press violated; that the Commons were 'a hired instrument to pillage an already impoverished and distressed people;' in fact, that there must be a new Convention. In the June, 1784, ensuing October a congress of 300 representatives, freely chosen by the Irish nation, must meet in Dublin. 'The majesty of the people would then resume its proper influence, and Divine Providence, knowing the justice of their cause, would assist them in obtaining their rights.'

Finally, the Corporation drew a petition to the King, complaining that the Reform Bill had been denied a hearing, that protection had been refused to their infant manufactures, that their newspapers had been confiscated and the publishers punished. They appealed for help to his majesty, and entreated him especially to abolish the remnant of the penal laws which oppressed their Catholic fellow-subjects.

The High Sheriff carried the petition to the Viceroy, with a request that it might be transmitted to St. James's. 'Gentlemen,' replied the Duke of Rutland, 'while I comply with your request in transmitting this paper to his majesty, I shall not fail to convey my entire disapprobation of it, as casting unjust reflections on the laws and Parliament of Ireland, and as tending to weaken the authority of both.'

Belfast trod in the steps of Dublin, and prepared a similar petition, which was sent immediately to the King by a deputation from the town. Pitt answered more courteously and with exact truth, that 'he had been and was a zealous friend to Reform in Parliament, but on grounds different from theirs; their plan was calculated to produce greater evils than those which the friends of Reform desired to remedy.'

Petitions having failed, other methods were resorted to which had succeeded too often. Another non-importation agreement was drawn and sent round, and largely signed—signed even by the Duke of Leinster. The tarring and feathering committee growing bolder with impunity, 'established an absolute do-<sup>August</sup>minion over men's fears, so that Government in vain endeavoured to prevail on those who had suffered to make any depositions against their tormentors.'<sup>1</sup> Dublin was patrolled nightly by cavalry and infantry, but the magistrates would lend no help; and if the soldiers were attacked and defended themselves, there was a clamour that innocent citizens were in danger of their lives from British savages.<sup>2</sup> Every day there was risk of collision between the regular troops and the Volunteers of the city. Every day the Press informed the people that the rights of Ireland were bought and sold, and the principles of liberty betrayed by venality and corruption.

The summer did not pass without actual bloodshed.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, August 21. Most private.'

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

At the end of August a conviction was at last obtained for tarring and feathering. A man named Garrat Dignam was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be flogged through the streets. The city magistrates, against their will, were forced to be present; the offender, with a strong guard of soldiers about him, was duly fastened to the cart's tail, and the lashing commenced. The crowd was enormous. At each cut furious yells ran along the line. Before the punishment was half over stones were thrown at the guard. A shot came from a window, by which a soldier was wounded. His comrades, without waiting for orders, levelled their muskets and fired into the howling mass. They had marked and succeeded in killing a conspicuous rioter, himself a member of the tarring and feathering committee, who was flourishing a sword. Three or four more were wounded. The crowd flew down the side lanes and disappeared, and the rest of the whipping was duly completed.

'I am determined,' wrote the Duke of Rutland, in reporting what had passed, 'that the execution of the law shall not be wantonly resisted, as far as my power can have influence.'<sup>1</sup>

When Ireland was disturbed England's enemies on the Continent were on the alert. Irish officers in the French service scenting odours of rebellion were reported as coming over in disguise. The patriots had traitors in their camp, who reported to the Duke that the agitators were now meditating an open revolt while

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord Sydney, August 25, 1784.' S. P. O.

the Volunteer corps remained in arms. Napper Tandy and his friends were in the habit of holding secret meetings where French emissaries were present, especially one who had come to Ireland with an introduction which had been given to him by Lord Carmarthen, at the request of the French Ambassador in London. At one of these meetings there was a singular scene. Ten years later the Irish patriots were red republicans, allies of Carnot and Hoche, anxious only to establish in Ireland the principles of Tom Paine. On this occasion Napper and his party 'drank the health of Louis XVI. on their knees.' 'Their acknowledged object was separation from England and the establishment in Ireland of the Roman Catholic religion.'<sup>1</sup>

The state of the city had begun to alarm quiet citizens even of patriotic sympathies. They desired to mark their sense of 'the late seditious proceedings' with proper indignation, and two parishes released themselves from the non-importation September  
1784 agreement, the Duke of Leinster heading the list of signatures.<sup>2</sup> But other measures were now needed. If rebellion was meditated, the Government required fuller knowledge; and 'a new plan of management' had to be adopted 'to obtain exact information of the conduct and motives of the most suspected persons.' 'Useful and confidential agents,' whose silence and fidelity could be relied on, 'who would write the daily history of a

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, August 26, 1784. Most secret.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, August 26.' S. P. O.



man's motions,' without betraying himself, were not to be found in Dublin.

The Irish Secretary applied to the English Cabinet to furnish him from their own staff of informers. Two valuable persons answering to Mr. Orde's description were sent, and the name of one of them will be an unpleasant surprise to those already interested in the history of the time.

They were both Irishmen—one was a skilled detective named Parker, an accomplished orator who could outmouth the noisiest patriot, and had already some knowledge of the leading agitators. Orde welcomed this man with a twinge of misgiving. 'I hope he is discreet,' he wrote, 'for he must to a certain extent be possessed of the power of hurting us by garrulity or treachery.'<sup>1</sup> The other was no less a person than the celebrated Father O'Leary, whose memory is worshipped by Irish Catholic politicians with a devotion which approaches idolatry. O'Leary, as he was known to the world, was the most fascinating preacher, the most distinguished controversialist of his time—a priest who had caught the language of toleration, who had mastered all the chords of Liberal philosophy, and played on them like a master; whose mission had been to plead against prejudice, to represent his country as the bleeding lamb maligned, traduced, oppressed, but ever praying for her enemies; as eager only to persuade England to offer its hand to the Catholic Church, and receive in return the affection-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, September 8, 1784.' S. P. O.

ate homage of undying gratitude. O'Leary had won his way to the heart of Burke by his plausible eloquence. Pitt seemed to smile on him: it is easy now to conjecture why. When he appeared in the Convention at the Rotunda the whole assembly rose to receive him. Had such a man been sent over on an open errand of conciliation his antecedents would have made the choice intelligible. But he was despatched as a paid and secret instrument of treachery, in reply to a request for a trained informer. What the Government really thought of Father O'Leary may be gathered from Orde's language when told to expect him. 'He could get to the bottom of all secrets in which the Catholics were concerned,' and Catholics were known to be the 'chief promoters' of the agitation in Dublin. But he too was to be dealt with cautiously, for he was a priest. 'They are all of them,' Orde said, 'designing knaves' — 'the only good to be derived from them is perhaps to deceive them into an idea that they are believed.'<sup>1</sup>

Parker and O'Leary reached Dublin at the end of September, and were both at once set to work.

'Your experts have arrived safe,' wrote the Secretary reporting their appearance. 'At this moment we are about to make trial of O'Leary's sermons and Parker's rhapsodies. They may be both in their different callings of very great use. The former, if we can depend on him, has it in his power to discover to us the real designs of the Catholics, from which quarter,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, October 17.' S. P. O.

after all, the real mischief is to spring. The other can scrape an acquaintance with the great leaders of sedition, particularly Napper Tandy, and perhaps dive to the bottom of his secrets.' <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, September 23, 1784. Private. S. P. O.

## SECTION VII.

ANXIETY was now concentrated on the intended Congress. It was not to consist, as before, of delegates from the Volunteers, but of professed <sup>September,</sup> <sup>1784</sup> representatives of the Irish nation. If such a Congress was elected and was allowed to meet, an armed collision between the people and the troops was anticipated as certain to ensue. The Irish noblemen and gentlemen, though in the utmost alarm, were too cowardly to appear in open opposition, and left the danger and the responsibility to the Government.<sup>1</sup> The Government, seeing that there was a real crisis, and that hesitation would be fatal, screwed its courage to the sticking-point. Lord Northington would have interfered with the Convention had he dared. The Duke of Rutland was braver than Northington, and determined that this new Congress should neither meet nor, if possible, be elected. Napper Tandy had issued circulars to the sheriffs of every county in Ireland requiring them to summon the King's lieges and invite them to choose representatives. The Duke intimated to the sheriffs that such a proceeding would

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<sup>1</sup> 'It is impossible to conceive any difficulty equal to that of prevailing on the principal persons here to take an active part to assist the Government. They are not insensible to the danger of indifference, but they hope to lie concealed under the wing of the administration which is to expose itself to the whole attack. — Mr. Orde to Mr. Evan Nepean, September 23, 1784.' S. P. O.

be contrary to the law and would not be permitted. Most of them had the wisdom to accept the warning. The impetuous High Sheriff of Dublin, Mr. Stephen Reilly, dared to disobey. His office gave him authority to call out the strength of the county. He used <sup>October</sup> it as a pretext to call a meeting of the freeholders, for a purpose certainly not contemplated when the Sheriffs had their powers assigned to them. The county members, General Luttrell and Luke Gardiner, attended to enter protests against the illegality of the Sheriff's action. They were outvoted. A resolution was passed to meet again and choose members for the Congress; another followed, that the Dublin citizens would support the Congress with their lives and fortunes.

'The leading persons' in the country were hanging back, but there was fortunately one member of the Administration who did not hang back—who understood the country, and knew that Irish sedition was formidable only to those who were afraid of it. In this same lawless summer, when Fitzgibbon was recruiting at Mount Shannon after the work of the session, a desperate ruffian was holding possession by force of a farm in the neighbourhood, from which he had been legally ejected.

The Sheriff of Limerick came to consult Fitzgibbon on the propriety of calling in the troops to enforce the law. Fitzgibbon said it would not be necessary. He mounted his horse, and took but a single servant with him. Usually when he went abroad he carried arms:

this time he left his pistols behind. He rode to the farmhouse, called the man to the door, and expostulated with him on his folly. He told him that if he did not surrender his holding in half an hour, he would assemble the gentlemen of the county, and not only dispossess him, but lay him in Limerick Gaol. The effect was instantaneous. The man was cowed and submitted. Precisely in the same spirit Fitzgibbon encountered the danger which was threatened in Dublin. He addressed a letter to Reilly, informing him that in summoning the freeholders he had been guilty of a serious breach of duty. If he called them together again and proceeded to an election, he would himself, as Attorney-General, immediately prosecute him. Reilly laughed at the threat, called his meeting, and was amusing his audience with reading Fitzgibbon's admonitions, when Fitzgibbon himself walked into the room, and then and there, in the very lion's den, he repeated to these fiery patriots that he would call the Sheriff to account if he took the chair and went further with the business in which he was engaged.

Irishmen admire personal courage even more than they love agitation. Stephen Reilly was overawed. The meeting dispersed, and the county of Dublin was without its representatives. When the 25th of October came, the day appointed for the Congress to assemble, a contemptible handful of gentlemen alone presented themselves. They met at a house in William Street, where they debated with closed doors. The Bishop of Derry had taken warning and staid at home. Flood.

attended, but was found unsatisfactory on Catholic emancipation. The abortive effort to supplant the Parliament was extinguished in ridicule, and the Congress went the way of the Convention.

From this moment till a new madness possessed the Legislature, the insubordination of Dublin was subdued. The punishment of one criminal and the fire of the soldiers made an end of the tarring and feathering. Fitzgibbon, who had done the work, to establish the principle, and to prevent for ever the upgrowth of rival representative assemblies, proceeded against Reilly by attachment as an officer of the State who had abused his commission. Challenged on the point of law the Attorney-General was supported by the Judges. Reilly was sentenced to fine and imprisonment. He was pardoned on making his submission, but authority had successfully asserted itself.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the following February Flood attacked Fitzgibbon in Parliament for the attachment of Reilly. Fitzgibbon replied, that in summoning the freeholders under cover of the *posse comitatus* to elect representatives, the Sheriff had broken the law. The Sheriff's power was an emanation of Royal authority, and was therefore punishable in a summary manner by the King's Bench, where the King was supposed personally to reside.

Curran said this was the introduction of arbitrary power. He asked why the Attorney-General had not indicted Reilly before a

jury. Fitzgibbon said the case would have come before a jury of the Sheriff's own choosing.

Flood again argued that attachments were an emanation from the Star Chamber, and were not part of the law of the land. The Attorney-General insisted 'that the election of representatives for a county, under the nature of delegates, without the King's writ, was a violation of the Constitution.' The House of Commons supported Fitzgibbon's view by a majority of more than two to one.—*Irish Debates*, February, 1785.

The Duke was able to report more cheerfully of his prospects. He could speak of 'the late ferment' as something that was past. The gentry had recovered their courage. The agitation was now limited to 'a Republican Section at Belfast and to particular classes among the Catholics who were worked on by priests and French emissaries.' Confined to these it had lost power to hurt. 'Rather,' he said, 'the improper conduct of a few Catholics, and the publications of a Catholic newspaper, the avowed disloyalty of some and the disloyalty of others, were likely so to cement together the men of property that Government would be stronger than ever.'<sup>1</sup>

The Constitution of '82, after a near escape from destruction in the violent rolls which had followed the launch, might now be considered fairly afloat. The composition of the House of Commons remained absurd. The means by which it was kept in working condition were disgraceful to itself and to England, and the demand at the sword's point for revolutionary changes having been successfully resisted, Mr. Pitt allowed himself to think that some degree of Reform might now be ventured. The question would probably be revived in another form when Parliament re-opened. He recommended the Duke of Rutland to establish a Protestant militia, which would of course be accompanied by the suppression of the Volunteers. He contemplated bringing an alteration of the Representation at an early

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<sup>1</sup> 'Edward Cooke to Mr. Evan Nepean, October 30. Private.'  
S. P. O



period before the Parliament of Great Britain. If the discussion could be postponed in Dublin till the subject had been settled in England, he implied, without positively stating, that the Government would consent to some necessary changes in Ireland also. 'The delay,' said the Cabinet letter, 'will enable your Grace to discover more clearly what plan of reform, if the event should at last take that turn, would be agreeable to the greatest number, and meet least objection from those who have hitherto supported the connection between Great Britain and Ireland.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Draft of a Cabinet letter to the Duke of Rutland, January 11, 1785.

## SECTION VIII.

MR. PITT's anxiety to restore Ireland to health and vigour was not confined to Parliamentary Reform. He desired to repair the injuries which had so long paralyzed her manufacturing industry; and although he would not indulge her inclination to rush into protective duties which would have enriched a few traders at the expense of the Irish consumers, he was willing to risk unpopularity at home by giving Ireland a genuine participation in the commercial prosperity of England, and so to arrange the trade of the two countries that English capital and English skill should be employed indiscriminately in both. The haste with which the Constitution of '82 had been hurried through had left the entire question untouched. Ireland had free trade, but who was to protect her trade, who was to represent her merchants abroad, under what system of duties were her exchanges with foreign countries to be regulated, and her manufactures or raw products allowed privilege in the markets, or passage through the ports, of the sister country? All these matters, vital as they were to Ireland's interests, remained open, and the settlement of them had hitherto been made impossible by the bondage of the Irish Parliament to the pretensions to which they had committed them-

selves. They had asserted their right of legislating for Ireland, externally as well as internally. There was now no escape but through a commercial treaty.

In the summer of 1784, Mr. Joshua Prim, a Dublin merchant, privately laid a scheme before Pitt, which in its commercial aspect was supremely favourable to Ireland—so favourable that his chief uncertainty was whether the English Parliament could be induced to listen to it. Divided into eleven propositions, it was based on the principle of the equalization of duties in both countries. The Irish linen manufacturers were to keep the protection which they enjoyed at present in the English markets. Retaining the privilege of fixing their own scale of duties on their own products, they were enabled by a special article to control the duties imposed on such articles in England. Intelligent men of business both in England and Ireland were agreed that the effect of the arrangement would be to make the Irish harbours the depôts of a large part of English commerce, and must operate as a proportionate encouragement to Irish domestic manufacture.<sup>1</sup>

In adopting Mr. Prim's proposals, Pitt's intention was to present Ireland with a genial offering of national good will, to abolish the memory of ancient grievances, and to open a road to sound reconciliation. The Irish Parliament met on the 20th of January. The speech from the throne recommended the commercial relations of the two countries to the consideration of the House of Commons. It treated the interests of England and

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<sup>1</sup> See the articles in *Plowden*, vol. iii. p. 105, *note*.

Ireland as inseparable. Confident in her own sincerity, Great Britain hoped that Ireland would meet her in a conciliatory spirit.

The beginning was unpropitious. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, now twenty-one years old, made his first appearance in Irish politics by opposing the address on the ground of the Reilly prosecution. It came to nothing however; and on the 7th of February Mr. Orde, <sup>February</sup> on behalf of Government, produced the eleven resolutions which were to form the basis of the new treaty. He went through the substantial part of his statement apparently with general approval. The Irish members were not generally skilled in commercial details, but each of the first ten articles seemed either to be innocent or to contain specific concessions to Irish interests. He arrived at the eleventh, the last. In return for a free, full, and perfect partnership with England, for free commerce with the English colonies, to whose foundation she had contributed nothing, for exclusion of the linen of Russia and Germany from the English markets in favour of the Ulster looms, for the protection of the navy abroad and at home, and the assistance of the English Consular department in every part of the world, the Parliament of Great Britain expected Ireland to make some return. The condition required was so mild that it would be inoperative until the Irish trade had become vigorous, and in times of depression would cease to bind. It was simply this, that for the protection of trade, whenever the gross hereditary revenue of Ireland should exceed 650,000*l.*,

the excess should be applied to the support of the Imperial Fleet.

The Secretary had no sooner sat down than Mr. Brownlow, the member for Armagh, who had been struggling to restrain his emotions, rose to deliver himself.

'I was hardly able,' he said, 'to contain my indignation while the honourable gentleman was speaking. I am astonished at his hardiness in proposing a resolution tending to make Ireland a tributary nation to Great Britain. The same terms were held out to America. Ireland has equal spirit to reject them. It is happy for Mr. Orde that he is in a country remarkable for humanity. Had he proposed such a measure in a Polish Diet, he would not have lived to carry back an answer to his master. The words of Virgil are often quoted—

*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes."*

I for my part have no fear. If the gifts of Britain are to be accompanied with the slavery of Ireland, I will never be a slave to pay tribute. I will hurl back her gifts with scorn.'<sup>1</sup>

The note had been touched which always drove Ireland mad. Brownlow's extravagant language found no imitators. He himself, indeed, apologized for it. Grattan spoke approvingly of the essential part of the propositions: but the eleventh article he, too, as well

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, February 7, 1785. 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney. Most secret.' S. P. O.

as every patriot in the House and out of it, refused to hear of.

Orde remonstrated with Grattan in private. John Foster, the most accomplished master of finance in the House, 'tried to convince him of the impolicy of opposition at so critical a time.' Their arguments produced nothing but a letter in which the great leader declared his determination to resist on the point to the death.

'You know Mr. Grattan's character,' the Duke wrote: 'experience has shown to what effect he can exercise his abilities when a strong ground of popularity is given him to stand upon.'

The national pride was touched, and Grattan would have forfeited confidence for ever had he hesitated. He took his ground with skill, and rested his opposition on economic grounds. He told Orde that 'till the Government brought its expenditure within the revenue, he would not consent to the appropriation of a farthing of it. The system of carrying on the administration by loans was ruinous.' 'He foresaw the violent resentment of an exasperated people, to whom Government, if it persevered, would become to the last degree obnoxious.'

The Irish Council, who knew the country, felt the hopelessness of resistance. The revenue leaking at a thousand pores through the inveteracy of the smuggling trade could never rise till the legitimate commerce was expanded. England was holding out what, under the existing circumstances of the world, might have proved

to Ireland a very horn of plenty. Ireland would not have it. The Council warned Rutland that he would proceed at his peril. They recommended an alteration limiting the appropriation to years in which the revenue should not be exceeded, and the introduction of an additional resolution that the interests of Ireland required that the accumulation of debt should be prevented and the revenue be made equal with the expenditure.

The Viceroy consented against his judgment.<sup>1</sup> Grattan gave his support with the new condition attached, and thus modified the resolutions were accepted by Ireland and transmitted.

Doubtless it was well to equalize income with outgoings. But the Parliament might have remedied what was amiss by a yet further resolution of self-denial, a resolution to demand no more wages in future for abstaining from mutiny. The Cabinet well understood the meaning of the proceeding. They did not blame the Duke, but they insisted naturally enough that it was useless to propose the treaty to the Parliament of Great Britain, unless Ireland, if she was to be admitted to share the commercial advantages of England, acknowledged her obligation to bear a proportional part of the expense.<sup>2</sup>

The British Parliament showed rapidly its own opinion of the matter. Pitt introduced the resolutions,

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, February 12. Most secret.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord Sydney to the Duke of Rutland, February 24, February 28, and March 3, 1785.' S. P. O.

modified as they were, in a speech in which he recommended Ireland to England's penitent generosity. He dwelt long on the tyranny by which for so many years the commerce of Ireland had been oppressed, and he invited the House warmly, and as an act of justice, to atone for it by now extending to her, without reserve, full rights of partnership with England and Scotland.

It is remarkable that the opposition rose from the quarter where Grattan's first efforts to liberate Irish trade had met the warmest support. The Irish had shrieked at the propositions as a snare to rob them of their liberties. Fox thought they conceded far too much to Ireland. They appeared to him to constitute Ireland grand arbitress of the commercial interests of the empire. The great towns struck in with petitions and remonstrances, to which Ireland's refusal to bind herself to contribute to the general expenses gave irresistible point. The propositions in their original form were abandoned; and an effort made in good faith to bring together the two countries, indissolubly united by nature, and for that reason, perhaps, so difficult to persuade into unity, was broken down by Ireland's passion for visionary and impossible independence.

Still Pitt persevered. He took back his scheme, and set himself to remodel it in a form under which it might have better fortune.



## SECTION IX.

MEANWHILE Ireland having again gone wild, was finding February, food for fresh suspicion. While it was frightened <sup>1785</sup> by Conventions and Congresses, the Parliament had been reasonable. No sooner was the danger ended by Fitzgibbon's courage than, instead of the halcyon days to which Rutland had looked forward, squalls came sweeping up from all sides of the horizon. Mr. Brownlow's speech had set the Irish blood boiling, and the passions which had been transferred to the Rotunda had migrated back to College Green.

To supersede the Volunteers by a force responsible to the executive was indispensable to the return of order and the revival of industry. Most of the original members had gone back to their occupations, and the regiments had been replenished from discontented artisans and aspiring and dangerous Catholics. The commercial propositions were to have smoothed the way towards the substitution for this questionable body of an organized militia. The way was now rougher than before, yet it was absolutely necessary to make the attempt. The eleventh article had created a suspicion that there was a Saxon plot on foot to undo the work of '82. The introduction of a Militia Bill turned the suspicion into certainty. Feared and condemned when the mad bishop was their hero, the Volunteers were again regarded as

the saviours of Ireland. Eulogies were poured on them from all sides of the House. They were the sacred army of Ireland's Constitution. They had watched over its birth. They had guarded its infancy. They, and only they, could be trusted to protect its maturing years against the treachery which threatened it.

Truth was too cold an element to suit the Irish House of Commons. To speak truth there was to be a traitor. It was, perhaps, a greater effort of courage in Fitzgibbon to resist the patriot members when they had the Volunteer frenzy on them, than to face Mr. Reilly's meeting or Napper Tandy's Congress. He rose when the tempest was loudest, and spoke with a clear, cold voice which compelled silence, cutting out his words as if with a chisel:—

'Gentlemen have run into an odd strain of invective against Government, and eulogium on the Volunteers because it is proposed to establish a militia. It is a new idea that a militia is an unconstitutional force. In England it is held the only constitutional army that can be embodied. It is impossible that the Volunteers—be their intentions ever so good or their loyalty ever so firm—can be of effectual service but under the command of the executive magistrate. When gentlemen say the contrary, they talk a language that was never before heard from persons of understanding. . . . If the same men had continued Volunteers, if they had not suffered their glory to be sullied, their names to be blasphemed by admitting into their ranks the armed beggary of the soil, they would have still remained the ornament of

their country. But of the original Volunteers the great majority have hung up their arms, and are retired to cultivate the arts of peace. Their station has been assumed by men who disgrace the name, and there is scarce a dishonourable action which such men have not committed. I have seen resolutions inviting the French into the country. In the April of last year the Sons of the Shamrock voted every Frenchman of character an honorary member of their corps. I have seen publications inviting Catholics, contrary to the law of the land, to arm themselves to reform the Constitution in Church and State. I have seen encomiums on Louis the Sixteenth, the friend of mankind and the assertor of American liberty. I have seen invitations to the dregs of the people to go to drill and form into corps. I have seen a summons from a major, ordering his corps to attend, with rounds of ball-cartridge, as there might be occasion for actual service. Will any man tell me we should be overawed by people like these? Are the Commons of Ireland to be told they shall not have a mutia till the dregs of the people who blast and disgrace the name of Volunteers shall choose to permit them? Let no one threaten the Commons of Ireland with the displeasure of any body of men out of doors. No body of men out of doors shall intimidate them. I desire again to distinguish between the gentlemen of Ireland, the original Volunteers, and the dregs of the people who, led on by vile incendiaries, dishonour the Volunteers' name; and I say, if I had no other reason than to show those sons of sedition that Government had a power to

blast them to atoms, I would vote for the establishment of a militia.<sup>1</sup>

Fierce as some band of devotees whose idol has suffered insult, the patriots in the House stormed against the blasphemer of the Volunteers. Their shouts reached the streets, and were caught and echoed by the again delirious mob. For three days Dublin was in inarticulate frenzy. On the 18th it found words, and Mr. Brownlow renewed his motion that the Volunteers had deserved well of their country. Luke Gardiner proposed as an amendment, that the House approves the conduct of those who since the war had gone back to their occupations. This was to repeat Fitzgibbon's insults. Mr. Todd Jones, an eminent disciple of Flood, cried out that he would hear no aspersions on the members of that noble body. They were accused of meddling in politics. He hoped they would continue to meddle till they had saved their country from a baneful aristocracy. 'The Volunteers,' he said, 'must aid the populace.'

Cries of 'Order' rose from the Government benches.

'Is a man to speak in this House,' enquired Mr. Sergeant Fitzgerald, 'of aiding the populace against the Constitution?'

Todd Jones refused to retract his words. 'By populace he meant the magnanimous people of Ireland.' He was forced at last to make a faint apology. Flood followed, however, in the same wild strain. He

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, February 14, 1785.

said that to speak against the Volunteers was blasphemy; that the gathering of the Volunteers was the most glorious page in Irish history. He moved to add to the amendment of Luke Gardiner that it was not 'to compromise the undoubted right of the freemen of Ireland to the possession and use of arms.'

Fitzgibbon, and only Fitzgibbon, could bring the Irish House of Commons to its senses. He liked to remind them of their inconsistencies. He moved that the Clerk of the House should read from the journals the reception of the bill sent from the Volunteer Convention. He then proceeded:—

'Not a man in this House has opposed the resolutions of thanks to the Volunteers for their conduct during the war. But there is scarce an injurious expression which has not been heaped on the ministry because an amendment is moved conveying approbation of such as retired on the return of peace. From the first I have ever reprobated the idea of appealing to the Volunteers, though I was confident Ireland was in no danger while they followed the counsel of the man whom I am proud to call my most worthy and honourable friend (Mr. Grattan). Sir, I say, while the Volunteers continued under his influence, I feared no evil from them; but I apprehended what has since come to pass, that when they should forsake him, designing incendiaries would make them the tools of faction and instruments of their vile ambition. The press has teemed with writings subversive of the Constitution in Church and State. Every man that has shown an

attachment to the religion or Government of his country has been libelled and calumniated, and the dregs of the people whose birthright I shall show that it is not, have been invited to carry arms. Sir, I say they should be compelled to lay them down. As long as such a body of men exists with arms in their hands, ready, at the instigation of any wicked man who, by declamation and affected popularity, may gain an ascendancy over them, to destroy the Constitution in Church and State, I say Government is not safe. It has been said every Protestant has a right to keep arms. It is not denied. But they have no right to flock to a standard except at the King's command and by his authority.

'I defy any man to refute me. This is the law. If there were any doubt of it, I would bring in a bill to declare it. The gentleman (Mr. Flood) says we mean to divide the Volunteers. Does he mean to admit Catholics? I am not a bigot, but I say the Irish Protestant who would admit Catholics to the use of arms, if he does not do it out of folly, is a most dangerous enemy to the country. The gentleman has intimated that there is a general disposition to resist the laws gone forth among the people, and therefore we should not coerce them. This is reasoning worthy of the cause. But it is not founded in fact. If it was, it would be the very reason for coercion.

'Sir, there can never be a good government while a body of men independent of the State remains in arms. I would therefore wish to see them retire to cultivate the blessings of peace. Any man who does

not array under lawful authority ought not to be trusted.'

The Patriots hooted, but the Attorney-General's courage was contagious. Members who had held high Volunteer commands agreed with him that <sup>March</sup> an armed force which refused obedience to the executive was virtually a rebel force. Mr. Green, the member for Dungarvan, said that a few evenings past he had seen a sergeant drilling a company of ragged, dangerous-looking ruffians, in Marlborough Street. He asked him what he was about with such men; the sergeant said rough times were coming; he was drilling them, to have them ready, and, damn him, he would have them as complete a corps as was in Ireland. In another street Mr. Green had seen a second sergeant with eighty recruits of similar aspect. He enquired to whom this corps belonged. 'Belong?' said the man. 'They belong to nobody; they are my corps, and by God I'll have them the best in Ireland, for there is to be a rebellion.'

'Were such men Volunteers?' Green asked. 'They were a desperate banditti, and ought to be disarmed.'

Mr. Brownlow's resolution was lost by 175 votes to 64. Luke Gardiner's amendment, commending the Volunteers who had returned to private life to cultivate the blessings of peace, was carried by a yet larger majority. But the House was still half-hearted. The Government was obliged to withdraw the Militia Bill, and to abandon for the present the hope of dealing

effectually with a dangerous body, who might at any moment set the country in a flame.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Charlemont was still the nominal Commander-in-Chief of the Volunteers, whom he dreaded, yet was reluctant to break with. He had issued orders for a summer review, and the Newry regiment presented him, in answer, with an address, intended as a reply to Fitzgibbon and Luke Gardiner. It was hushed up as too strong for publication:—

‘My Lord,—Your Lordship’s orders for a summer review, and our alacrity in obeying them, are the best answer to the late indirect attack on the perpetuity of the Volunteer establishment. We shall endeavour to protect as well as cultivate the blessings of peace, by holding ourselves well prepared for war; and conscious that those blessings are precarious when held at the discretion of others, we shall retain our arms, not only as proof of present possession, but as a seal of future security.

‘Peace, my Lord, is not the gloomy stillness of men brooding over the wrongs they have suffered. It is the stable tranquillity of undaunted freedom, fixing a firm footing on the rights of human nature, and leaning on the arms by which those rights are to be defended.

‘We will not lay down our arms. They are the pledges of peace, which is the object and end of our institution. They are dear to us on many accounts—dear for what they have gained. dear for what they

will still gain, and doubly dear, by cementing a union between us faithful Volunteers and you our honoured commander.

‘We shall grasp hard, my Lord, what we thus hold dear. Should a time ever arrive when foreign tyranny shall give place to domestic usurpation, when law shall be put as it were on the rack to give evidence against the principles of the constitution, when juries shall be superseded by judges, and the summary jurisdiction of particular Courts be made an omnipotent and omnipresent instrument of ministerial vengeance, when every obstruction shall be thrown into the channels of public information and private correspondence, when the business of finance shall be the sole business of the State, when extension of trade shall be transformed into a severe system of taxation, and when Ireland shall be kept as a barrack for the empire—even then, my Lord, we shall not deem ourselves totally stripped and despoiled while our arms are remaining. But if our enemies should ever express a desire to wrench out of our hands this last hope, this solitary distinction left between a freeman and a slave, what then, dear General, can we do but answer in laconic and soldierly language, in a single word, in a single syllable, “*Try?*”

Enclosed by the Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, May 20, 1785. S. P. O.



The battle upon the Volunteers was thus practically a victory of the Patriots. To fill the time, till the commercial question should come on again, there were partial skirmishes on Parliamentary Reform. An independent member introduced a Bill to prevent the purchase of seats—one of those Bills so good in themselves which answer the purpose of no one. Mr. Brownlow was able to show that the saleable boroughs were the hope of the Radical party. ‘The most advanced Reformers, men of independent spirit, unconnected with and uninfluenced by the persons by whom they were returned, thus found seats in Parliament. If the patrons were forbidden to sell, they would return their own creatures or would give the nomination to the ministers, and the public would pay the price of the seat to the person who misrepresented them.’

April, 1785 A more comprehensive measure would alone answer the ends of anarchy. On the 28th of April Mr. Flood re-introduced the Bill of the last session.

‘Great Britain,’ he said, ‘had been destroyed by the corruption of her Parliament. Ireland’s case was worse. He had wept for years over it. Even in the counties the elections were a farce; the returns were controlled by manufactured votes. A landowner in Tyrone said to his neighbour in Armagh, “I will make May, 1785 forty or fifty freeholders in your county, if you will make as many in mine. They shall go to you if yours come to me.” In the towns, where a form of

franchise remained, men were made honorary members of the corporations to swamp the votes of the genuine electors. Was it not childish, was it not an insult to the understanding to call a House of Commons so chosen representative ?'

The true answer was that a House of Commons which should be really representative would throw the country into convulsions, and was incompatible with the maintenance of English authority. It was better, therefore, to leave unchanged a system which, if absurd in theory, at least made government possible.

The bare truth would have been unpalatable. Understood by every one it could not be nakedly avowed. Fitzgibbon's heavy artillery was not needed when the object was to play with fictions.

The speaker for the Castle was Sir Hercules Langrishe, the witty favourite of the Duke of Rutland.

'If,' he said, 'there could be such a mass of oddity in the human mind as that the people were in love beforehand with everything which calls itself Reform, I could furnish a seraglio for their raptures. I have in my pocket seventeen different plans for Reform in Parliament, and I could collect as many more. The honourable gentleman says the people demand Reform. The mob may demand it, but not the people. Peace and industry are ever silent; discontent and disorder are ever clamorous, and ten men and ten women that are clamorous make more noise than ten thousand who are satisfied and silent. When a man talks of the voice of the people, he means the voice of those who echo his

own. Personal equality of representation, the only equality that I can conceive, would be a pure democracy, and in a country like ours, where the democracy does not profess the religion of the State, a democracy subversive of the laws and the constitution.'

The Bill was again thrown out on the second reading by 112 to 60.

## SECTION X.

HAD Ireland accepted the eleven propositions in the spirit in which they were offered, Mr. Pitt might <sup>August,</sup> have induced the British Parliament, perhaps <sup>1785</sup> with a bad grace, to swallow them. Mr. Brownlow's burst of rhetoric and Grattan's support of him furnished the Opposition with effective weapons, and it fared with the offers made to Ireland as with the books of the Sibyl.

Re-digested and extended to twenty, the articles now proposed for a treaty of commerce between the two kingdoms withdrew privileges which the Irish might have retained, and interposed stipulations which encroached further on Irish independence than the obligation in the eleventh resolution, which had been the occasion of the storm. In deference to the wishes of Liverpool and London, it was now provided that, whatever Navigation laws were adopted by the British Parliament, the Irish Legislature must bind itself to re-enact. Under the terms first offered Irish trade was unrestricted by local limitation, and the East and West Indies would have been alike open to them. Though they might still trade freely for themselves with the Dutch, Spanish, and French Colonies in the West Indies, they were allowed to re-import into England only the produce of the English West Indian Colonies, and 'they were debarred from countries east

of the Cape of Good Hope' so long as the Charter of the East India Company continued.

The new resolutions were carried through the English House of Commons on the 20th of May, and through the House of Lords on the 19th of July. On the 12th of August Mr. Orde came once more before the Irish Parliament with his altered wares.

The changes made were of course notorious. They had been debated up and down the country, and had been received with rage and disappointment. The Table of the House of Commons was covered with denunciatory petitions. The petitioners prided themselves on their discernment. It was now proved that, as they suspected, England had been laying a snare all along to deceive them. 'A serpent was in the bowl which had been offered to their lips,' and simple, confiding Ireland had been all but bitten by it.

The Government had anticipated an outcry, but had not been prepared for such utterly wild extravagance. Characteristically the indignation turned less on the substantial advantages which had been withdrawn than on the imaginary menace to their independence, which was now as they conceived more nakedly revealed.

The serpent which they detected was hidden in the clause which bound them to re-enact England's Navigation laws. Grattan said that such a demand was a revocation of the Constitution. Sir Lawrence Parsons said that the resolutions meant at best that England had a right to extend the commerce of Ireland—an assertion of superiority which no Irishman should

allow. There had been hints in the English papers of a possible Legislative Union. 'Good God, sir,' exclaimed Dennis Brown, 'what union could we have with Great Britain but a union of debt and taxation?'

Then Flood came riding triumphant on the crest of the popular wave. He described the whole affair as the most infamous attack on Irish independence. 'The Irish Parliament,' he said, amidst salvos of applause, 'will not become the register of the English Parliament. Freedom of the Constitution is necessary to freedom of trade. Liberty is the nurse of commerce; I will not give up an atom of it. I say you have not a right to give it up; but if a Parliament could be so base, so profligate, as to attempt it ("Hear, hear," from Fitzgibbon), I ask you may it not be attempted? Was not every European country free once as yours? Why are they now slaves but by the corruption of their Senates? Could you be so corrupt, I assure you the people will not. They must not. They shall not. I will raise my voice. I will be heard in the extremity of the land. I say if you give leave to bring in a Bill you are no longer a Parliament. I will no longer consider you so. Meet it boldly, and not like dastards fearful to guard your rights, though you talk bravely to your wives and children, trembling at a foreign nation.'

The unfortunate Secretary protested mildly that the House was out of its wits. England had no treacherous intentions. She wished only to attach Ireland closer to herself, and to prevent a rivalry in trade which

could only injure them both. The resolutions as they stood removed the prohibitions which English jealousy had created to keep her trade to herself. They could not fail to be infinitely beneficial to Ireland, so beneficial that there had been the greatest difficulty in inducing England to consent to them.

Orde's words were blown to atoms as they left his lips. All night long the howling gusts continued. Grattan said that if ever the question was presented to them, whether the Empire or the Constitution was to be sacrificed, he as an Irishman would say—Perish the Empire. Curran spoke at six in the morning, 'hoping his exhausted condition was not a symbol of the condition to which his country would be reduced if the Bill became law.' At nine in the morning<sup>1</sup> the House divided. Leave was given to introduce Mr. Orde's Bill, but only by a narrow majority of 19.

Two days were allowed, in the feeble hope that the delirium would abate. On the 15th the Bill was produced, and a second battle began over it.

Flood moved, 'That we hold ourselves bound not to enter into any engagements to give up the sole and exclusive right of Parliament to legislate for Ireland in all cases, externally, commercially, or internally.' On the top rank of fame once more, and first favourite of the populace, he treated the division of Saturday as equivalent to victory. He spoke in contemptuous pity of the supporters of Government who dared not show their true convictions. He described them as hiding

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<sup>1</sup> Saturday, August 13.

their heads in shame, but undertook to spare them the disgrace of further injuring their country's cause.

Other orators followed in the stream of the popular frenzy. Then Fitzgibbon came to the front and took up Flood's challenge.

'The honourable member,' said he, 'wishes to pass the resolution as a vindication of gentlemen on this side of the House who now hide their heads. For my part I never hid myself from any public question, nor ever will. The man who in office or out of office can stoop to hide from a public question is in my opinion a despicable man. I will never skulk from any measure. If I approve it, I will support it like a man. If not, I will oppose it like a man. I repeat before the House, I repeat in the face of the nation, that the Bill brought in this night is highly advantageous to its commerce, and in no way incompatible with its free constitution. Gentlemen may triumph in their opposition to this Bill. I will defend it line by line and word by word. I will meet their whole array upon it. The clamour that has been raised is as unfounded and as little to be regarded as any that ever disturbed the deliberations of a wise assembly. In every session since 1779, when you obtained the colony trade, you recite the conditions on which you possess it—you recite the British tax and you enact it. What is the difference here? You are permitted to trade to every possession which Great Britain has, provided you adopt the laws by which she regulates her trade, provided you trade as British subjects trade. Every advantage which British subjects



enjoy is offered to your acceptance. I call on every man living to tell me where there is an iota of difference. Therefore let no man talk to me of hiding my head. I support the Bill as highly advantageous to this country. The honourable gentleman says it is necessary to answer the resolutions of England by his resolution which he has read. Let me tell gentlemen it is not very prudent upon every occasion to come forward in terms of indignation against the sister kingdom, because we cannot exist one moment without her protection. Let me tell them here that it will not be perfectly prudent to rouse Great Britain. She is not easily roused, but if roused she is not easily appeased; and in this, perhaps, lies the difference between the two kingdoms. Ireland is easily roused, but then she is easily appeased.

‘You say you may go on as you are. You have already a free trade, and that is all you want. You have indeed a right to trade, but without the assistance and protection of Great Britain you have not the means of trading with any nation on earth. There is not a single article in which you can trade without the assistance of England, and I desire by this Bill to secure her protection and assistance. When the people of this country are restored to their sober senses they will see it. The Bill for ever guarantees your linen trade, to promote which England taxes her own consumption 450,000*l.* yearly. On the German and Russian linens she lays a heavy duty, and is content to pay an advanced price for the Irish. Yet still the Russian and

German manufacturers can in some degree meet Ireland in the English market. If the duty was taken off they would beat her out of it altogether, and therefore I say she is a besotted nation if she seeks to quarrel with England.'

Clamours rose on all sides. Eager members started to their feet, declaring that Ireland was insulted. No one in that House should say that Ireland could not exist without England.

Fitzgibbon continued:—

'I am obliged for the opportunity of reflection, and I hope gentlemen who have been so hot on this occasion will reflect that the best manner in which I can show my sense of the obligation conferred on me is to repeat the words at which they have taken offence. I say if Ireland seeks to quarrel with England she is a besotted nation. I say she has not the means of trading with any nation on earth without the assistance of Great Britain, and I wish every man and every child through Ireland to hear me when I say it. I say Ireland cannot exist one hour without the support of Great Britain. When the people recover their senses, and awaken from the delusion and frenzy into which they have been misled, if the benefits of this Bill are then within their reach, they will grasp at them. In my mind we have taken a millstone from Mr. Pitt's neck and hung it about our own.

'I love the Irish nation too well to insult her. Her solid interests are too near my heart, and therefore I will not flatter her. When she forgets her

real situation I will remind her of it. I never will insult her, but I will speak to her freely of her faults, because I have no interest in flattering her; and without regard to the gentleman's heat, or to his interruption, to which I can listen with great coolness, I shall on all occasions freely deliver my opinions to this assembly.'<sup>1</sup>

Truer words had never been spoken in the Irish or any other Parliament, and in proportion to the truth of the language was Ireland's hatred of it. Curran insulted Fitzgibbon so grossly on his sitting down, that, according to the rules of the time, a duel had to follow.<sup>2</sup> In the division the Government majority was reduced even lower than before, and the Secretary announced that the Bill would not be pressed further.

Ireland was of course in ecstasies. Out of every county came addresses of congratulation from the grand juries. Dublin was illuminated. Non-importation agreements—the now invariable resource when England was to be punished—were adopted universally. The populace was so excited with alternate exultation and rage, that the peace of the city was only preserved by patrols of soldiers. The repression of

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, August 15, 1785.

<sup>2</sup> The particulars of Curran's expressions are not preserved in the *Debates*. They were too discreditable, both to him and to the House which endured them. In the field, Curran fired first, and missed. Fitzgibbon was said to have aimed at

him steadily; perhaps to make sure of doing him no serious harm. He also missed, and then left the ground. Curran called after him, 'It was not your fault, Mr. Attorney, if you missed me; you were deliberate enough.'

the national sentiment by these rude means was a fresh injury. The Duke of Rutland, on appearing in the theatre, was received with the Volunteers' March. He was mobbed on leaving it, and narrowly escaped personal injury.

## CHAPTER II.

## WHITEBOYS, HIGH AND LOW.

## SECTION I.

**T**HE Irish Parliament was lashing itself into madness over ideal grievances. The peasantry caught the contagion, and burst into similar fury over <sup>1785</sup> grievances which unhappily were only too real.

To escape the return of periodic rebellions, British authority had established in Ireland two institutions whose function was to control anarchy and to reclaim ignorance. It had established a ruling class and a teaching class, a landed gentry and a Protestant clergy of the Anglican Communion.

The landlords had been endowed with the soil which had been taken forcibly from the natural owners. The clergy had passed into possession of the ancient estates of the Church of Ireland, and of the tithes, which, inasmuch as nine-tenths of the cultivators of the soil were either Catholics or Presbyterians, were wrung from the earnings of the poor of an alien faith, who were burdened besides with the maintenance of

their own priests and ministers. The least that could have been expected from persons so favourably conditioned would have been an endeavour to fulfil the ends of their existence. The great persons of the Protestant laity and spirituality had contended, with individual exceptions, in a dishonourable rivalry of neglect. The risings of the Whiteboys, the Oak Boys, and the Hearts of Steel might have recalled the gentry to the memory of their obligations. They had used the resources of the Government to drive these poor wretches into exile or submission; and while they were themselves agitating for what they called the liberties of their country, their own hand had grown daily more heavy over the victims of their oppression. Half-drowned already in extravagance, they had burdened more deeply their embarrassed estates in the Volunteer insanity. Their resource was to squeeze once more their miserable tenantry. In 1785 they had raised the rents of the potato gardens in the south and west to five and six pounds an acre. Their functions as magistrates were a jest. Duels were fought daily either by themselves or their sons under their eyes. Men and boys fought and killed each other, and there was no punishment. Young girls, children of the few industrious men of business who had saved money, were still carried off and ravished and forced into marriage. The magistrates looked on with folded hands, and gentlemen of conscience and honour were at length driven to form organizations of their own, independent of the law, to protect their families from these infernal

outrages.<sup>1</sup> Their houses swarmed with younger brothers or cousins too proud to work, who called themselves gentlemen, and were entitled therefore to shoot or be shot,<sup>2</sup> who spent their time loafing in the stables or kennels, breaking horses, or gambling on the racecourses, or lounging in the tawdry profusion of the family mansion or castle. Supported by these modern *Kerne*, the landlord of an estate inhabited by Catholics was a despot who knew no law but his own will.<sup>3</sup> Resistance he punished with a cane or a horse-whip. 'The justices of the peace,' says Arthur Young, 'were the very worst class in the kingdom.' Lawless themselves, they had an affinity for their own kind. Offenders of all kinds found in them their natural protectors, and like the chiefs whom they succeeded

<sup>1</sup> 'Ireland,' says Arthur Young, in 1776, 'is the only country in Europe where associations among men of fortune are necessary for apprehending ravishers. It is scarcely credible how many young women, even of late years, have been carried off and ravished, in order, as they have generally fortunes, to gain the appearance of a voluntary marriage. These actions are not committed by the class I am describing, but they are by them acquitted.'—*Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> 'A tradesman has not a right to the point of honour. You may refuse his challenge — *Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Jonah Barrington tells an anecdote of an event in his own family, which he cannot be supposed

to have invented. 'His grandmother, an O'Brien, had an "antipathy" to a neighbour, a Mr. Dennis Bodkin. One day, at the midday dinner, she launched into abuse of Dennis, concluding that "she wished the fellow's ears were cut off." At supper that evening the old butler, Ned Regan, laid a snuffbox on the table before his mistress. She opened it, and there dropped out a pair of bloody ears. On a cry of horror rising, Regan said coolly, "Sure, my lady, you wished Dennis Bodkin's ears were cut off, so I told old Gahagan, the gamekeeper, and he took a few boys with him, and brought them back, and I hope you are plased, my lady."'—*Memoirs of My Own Time*, vol. i. p. 46.

they sheltered themselves from the vengeance of their peasant tenants by the arm of their ruffian dependents.

Had Grattan been a true friend of Ireland, instead of clamouring for an absurd independence, he would have set himself to recall the gentry of Ireland to a recollection of the word 'duty.' He would have appealed to the loyal and the worthy. He would have called on England to send back the absentees, and England could not have refused. Here was work for a very Hercules; a labour worthy of a place beside the memorable *twelve*. To have achieved it would have been to have achieved an enterprise fit to be written in letters of gold in the annals of the three kingdoms. But far from Grattan was a desire to heal the real sores of the country for which he was so zealous. These wild disordered elements suited better for the campaign in which he engaged of renovating an Irish nationality. He let the landlords alone. He set himself to assail the second institution which England had planted at an enormous expense, and, like an unthrifty husbandman, had left to its fortunes.

The sarcasm of Dean Swift on the constitution of the Episcopal Bench of Ireland was, perhaps, sharpened by his own exclusion from it, and by the political opinions of the rivals who were promoted over his head. But as the serious spirit of the seventeenth century died away the Church of Ireland lost the energy which once undoubtedly belonged to it. For an Archbishop Boulter there was an Archbishop Stone, and Stone was unfortunately only the most developed type of the



prelates who surrounded and succeeded him. The Irish sees were wealthy. The rise in the price of land had quadrupled, in many instances far more than quadrupled, the value of the old estates of the Church. They became thus objects of ambition to the relatives of English politicians, and were made the reward of political support. The Bishop of Derry was a specimen, if a violent one, of the class of persons to whom it pleased the rulers of England to entrust the spiritual charge of the most critical department of the empire. The rich livings were given away on the same principle either by the Crown or by private patrons. Indefinite pluralities were permitted to those who were so happy as to possess influence at Court, and the absenteeism of landlords was imitated by wealthy Irish incumbents who preferred a wider field of usefulness in preaching to the fashionable congregations of London and Bath. 'The Church of Ireland,' said Curran, in the House of Commons,<sup>1</sup> 'has been in the hands of strangers advanced to the mitre, not for their virtues or their knowledge, but quartered on this country through their own servility or the caprice of their benefactors, and inclined naturally to oppress us, to hate us, and to defame us.' The practical work of the Protestant religion, so far as it was done at all, was left to native clergy of Irish birth, the smaller incumbents whose benefices were too trifling to be a temptation, or by curates who discharged the indispensable duties for a pittance of 40*l.* or 50*l.* a year; and although of poor

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<sup>1</sup> February 19, 1787.

rectors and poor curates there was generally an honourable report, it was an expectation more sanguine than practical that by such means Catholic Ireland could be evangelized.

The first conspicuous and monstrous failure was in the Charter Schools, founded by men of piety and intelligence. The Charter Schools were the best-conceived educational institutions which existed in the world. They were recommended annually to Parliament in the speech from the throne, and Parliament had responded liberally by raising its grants from 2000*l.* to 20,000*l.* a year. Yet, after the first few years, the number of the boarding-schools was not increased. The affiliated day-schools disappeared. The stagnation was assigned to the opposition of the priests. An examination of the state of the schools in 1787 showed that little inducement remained to tempt the peasantry to resist the priests' warnings against them.

The principle of the institution was industrial education, with the Church Catechism as its base. A farm was attached to each establishment for practical instruction in agriculture. Trades of all kinds were, in theory, carried on within the walls. The children were to weave their own clothes. The flax, out of which they made their shirts and shifts, was to be sown by themselves. The sheep which furnished the wool for their coats and petticoats were to be fed and sheared by their own hands. They were taught to raise their own food and prepare and dress it. They were furnished with knowledge and skill to enable them to lead useful

lives. When their school teaching was finished they were apprenticed at the cost of the society, and when they had served their time they received further assistance to start them in life.

Ingenuity could have devised no better gift to impoverished Ireland than a school of this kind in every barony. Such was the intention of the founders, and care and honesty might with ease have made the intention into act. For care and honesty there was only neglect and jobbing, and therefore it was not carried into act. Institutions are nothing without efficient men to work them. The wreck of trade and the disorganization of labour destroyed the apprentice system. The master and mistress plundered the funds, starved the children, and made the industrial system an excuse for using the pupils as slaves to fill their own pockets. In a country where, from highest to lowest, forgetfulness of duty was the rule of life, the managers of schools were not likely to be an exception. They only did what they saw all others doing. They took their level of obligation from the scale generally acted on. The English ministers appropriated the Irish offices of State to their English political supporters. The Viceroy appropriated the Irish revenues to bribe the patriots. Members of Parliament jobbed the taxes. Country gentlemen jobbed the county cesses, and all alike combined to plunder the poor. In such an atmosphere a generous conception like that of the Charter Schools could only wither like the rest.

But the responsibility and therefore the blame

rested with the bishops. They were the trustees. Their business it was to visit, to correct, to report if necessary to Parliament, to remove incompetent officers. They held that they discharged their obligations sufficiently by mouthing sonorous platitudes in the House of Lords, and by preaching occasional sermons, while they divided their time between their Irish palaces, or their London houses, varied with crusades in the House of Lords against a relaxation of Dissenters' disabilities.

The bishops, like the Olympian gods, were set too high above the storms of inferior life to be assailed easily, either in their dignity or their income. The rank and file of the clergy were more accessible, and were more immediately objects of provocation. The bishops drew their incomes from land, with which they were only connected through their agents. The rectors and vicars depended upon tithes, and on tithes which were raised in the north from Presbyterians, and in the rest of the island from Catholics. The thin attendance at the churches contrasted painfully with the crowds which thronged the chapels. In some districts the congregations had dwindled to nothing. They could not be expected to reside when there was no work for them to do. As the absentee landlord had his middleman, the absentee incumbent had his tithe farmer and tithe proctor, perhaps of all the carrion birds who were preying on the carcass of the Irish peasantry the vilest and most accursed. In his origin the tithe proctor was a parish officer, appointed and

paid by the people, at a time when they were on a less painful footing with the Protestant clergyman, to compound with him for his general dues. As the century waned and life grew more extravagant, the tithe proctor, like his neighbours, became more grasping and avaricious. He exacted from the peasants the full pound of flesh. His trade was dangerous, and therefore he required to be highly paid. He handed to his employer perhaps half what he collected. He fleeced the flock and he fleeced their shepherd. 'The use of the tithe farmer,' said Grattan, 'is to get from the parishioners what the clergyman would be ashamed to demand, and to enable the clergyman to absent himself from duty. His livelihood is extortion. He is a wolf left by the shepherd to take care of the flock in his absence.'

There were gradations of them, as with the middlemen, one below the other. A tithe farmer in active practice of his profession held of another who held of a proctor, who held of a clergyman who did not reside. He pursued his calling in a parish where there was neither dean, rector, vicar, nor schoolmaster; often he was an officer of the revenue besides, and would arrange his demands for his own advantage, overcharging the tithes and pocketing the surplus, and compensating the tithe-payer by undercharging his taxes. Like the Roman usurers in the early days of the Republic, he took his payments in the form of interest-bearing bonds, and when the bonds fell due the peasants became his slaves and ploughed his soil and

carried his crops for him with their own carts and horses, to escape execution.

The burden was the more cruel because the poor were his only victims. The wealthy Protestant grass farmers ought to have been the first to bear the expense of the Protestant Church. They paid nothing at all. The cost of the Establishment fell in the south exclusively on the poorest of the Catholic tenantry. The Munster cottier paid 7*l.* a year for his cabin and an acre of potato ground. The landlord took his rent from him in labour, at 5*d.* or 6*d.* a day; the tithe farmer took from 12*s.* to 20*s.* from him besides, and took in addition from the very peat which he dug from the bog a tithe called in mockery 'smoke money.'

These abominable extortions furnished a tempting opportunity to the apostles of anarchy. Patient themselves and naturally silent under suffering, the Irish peasants were ready instruments in the hands of scoundrels who played upon their real wrongs, to excite them to political insubordination. The Dublin and Belfast incendiaries were enraged at the threat of the suppression of the Volunteers, and created a division by kindling an agrarian insurrection in Munster. After fifteen years of quiet the Whiteboys re-  
1786  
appeared in the spring and summer of 1786.

The movement began in Kerry. The inhabitants of a couple of parishes met in a Catholic chapel, and took an oath to pay no more than a specified sum to the clergyman or his agent. They went, on successive Sundays, from chapel to chapel, swearing in the people

everywhere, and binding them to obey at all times and occasions a phantom leader, Captain Right. The oath was generally taken with willingness; any one who dared to refuse was dragged from his bed at midnight; his ears were sawn off, and he was flung into a pit lined with thorns, or set naked on horseback on a thorn saddle.<sup>1</sup> By these means Captain Right soon had all Munster at his obedience. His army was scattered everywhere, appearing in daylight as harmless peasants, in the night as so many fiends. His first order was to disarm the Protestants in the province. Midnight gangs appeared at every Protestant door, and with as much violence as might be necessary, 'thoroughly carried the order into execution.'<sup>2</sup> The next step was to establish a system of finance. Regular contributions were levied to support Captain Right's government. The Whiteboy authority being thus well established, the war with the tithe proctors commenced. The sentence on them was as the measure of their guilt. If they had been definitely cruel they were condemned to die, and the sentence was promptly executed. If their offences had been only moderate they were 'carded,' that is to say, they were stripped naked and tied with their faces downwards, while a strong tom-cat was dragged up and down their backs by the tail.

The tithe proctor knew the danger of his profession

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- 'Speech of Mr. Fitzgibbon.' | University, January 18, 1785. --  
 —*Irish Debates*, January 31, 1787. | Ibid.  
<sup>2</sup> Speech of Mr. Brown, of the

when he entered it, and charged for the risk in his bill. But the vengeance did not rest in punishing the instrument of tyranny, and fell in its blind fury upon others who were wholly innocent. The curate had not injured the people whom the pluralist or absentee rector had hired at a servant's stipend. Of him the most eloquent declaimers on the wrongs of Ireland could find nothing to say but what was good. He had prayers in his church twice a day.<sup>1</sup> He baptized the children, married the adults, visited the sick, and buried the dead. He was a scholar and a gentleman, saved perhaps by poverty from following the general road of worthlessness. Except for the poorer clergy the Church of Ireland must have perished of corruption before the century closed. So far as their means extended they had been distinguished for kindness and liberality. But they were the symbols of a tyrannical system; they were defenceless, they were at hand, and they were Protestant ministers, and this was enough for their condemnation. The landlords with peculiar baseness refused to exert themselves in their defence. 'Men of the purest and most inoffensive manners were torn from their beds at midnight. Their wives and children were driven naked out of doors, themselves rolled on dunghills, and hardly suffered to escape with life.'<sup>2</sup> Lord Luttrell said in Parliament that a friend of his riding one morning out of Carling-

<sup>1</sup> So Grattan seems to say—'See the curate. He rises at six to morning prayer. He leaves company at six for evening prayer.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Speech of Mr. Secretary Orde,' March 29, 1786. — *Irish Debates.*



ford overtook a clergyman who seemed in pain, with his head bound in a napkin. He asked if anything was the matter. 'Did you not see, sir,' said the poor wretch, 'as you rode through the town two ears and a cheek nailed to a post? *They were mine.*'<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the south the churches were deserted. The clergy were flying from their glebe-houses to the cities, forced to leave their duties by Captain Right and his followers. Could an example have been made of the non-resident rectors, who were gathering admiring circles round them at the Bath tea-tables, the atrocity would have been relieved by the sense that justice was being done, however rudely. Irony could not have selected less appropriate victims than the curates and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Speech of Lord Luttrell.'—*Irish Debates.*

## SECTION II.

THE Constitution of '82 had been the opening of the box of Pandora. Everyone who was starving expected to be filled, everyone who had been wronged to have his wrongs redressed, everyone who was robbing his neighbour to keep his spoils and escape punishment. Jack Cade's promises were moderate compared to what Irishmen of every degree were looking for as the fruit of that glorious victory. The descendants of the Irish chiefs, among the rest, had dreamt of a good day coming to them, and as the good day was slow in appearing they took the matter into their own hands. 1786

In the winter of 1785-6 Mr. Roderick O'Connor, calling himself the representative of the old Kings of Connaught, entered forcibly on the lands of his ancestors in Roscommon. He established himself in a fastness in the midst of bog and mountain. He had a cannon at his door and a thousand men scattered within sound of it ready to assemble at its call. The peasants gathered about him with idolatrous devotion. Notices were served on the intruding landowners to be gone at their peril. Coupled with the reappearance of the Whiteboys, Mr. O'Connor's proceeding was a startling surprise, and Parliament met in January somewhat sobered after the orgies of the past session.

The English Cabinet had decided to make no

immediate offer of another commercial treaty, but to leave the Irish time to recover their senses. The question of pressing importance was now the peace of the country. In the absence of a police, and with a local magistracy incapable or unwilling to act, the repression of crime was cast exclusively on the English army, which was thus in perpetual collision with the people. The Volunteers had degenerated into an armed mob. In the disturbed districts their arms had passed surreptitiously into the hands of the Whiteboys. The southern province was covered with incendiaries, equipped with muskets, pikes, and pistols, while the Protestants had been carefully stripped of every weapon which they possessed. If authority was to reassert itself, the choice lay only between a militia and an organized constabulary.

The attempt to establish a militia had failed. The Cabinet, still dreaming of conciliation, were unwilling to renew a proposal which involved the disarming of the Volunteers. They had discovered on second thoughts that a militia must necessarily be Protestant, that the Catholics would be alarmed and offended, and that it was 'extremely unadvisable to irritate and mortify them;' while to suppress the Volunteers by force was serious and hazardous, and it seemed more prudent to leave them to decline by themselves.<sup>1</sup> The choice fell, therefore, on a constabulary, if the consent of Parliament could be obtained for it, and the Viceroy

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<sup>1</sup> 'Cabinet despatch to the Duke of Rutland, January 7, 1786. Most secret.'

was instructed to feel his way with tentative and partial advances.

To conciliate Irish disaffection was as hopeful a project as to conciliate the plague. To save immediate trouble the Cabinet persuaded themselves that although conciliation had failed a thousand times it might succeed on the thousand and first. Rutland agreed that if they desired 'to avoid measures calculated <sup>January,</sup> to stir political passions' they must leave the <sup>1786</sup> Volunteers alone; the ugly feature in the leaving them alone, however, being that when a corps dissolved the arms were not given up, 'but remained in the hands of the rabble of the country.'<sup>1</sup>

Parliament opened calmly, as if alive to the seriousness of the situation, and addressed itself to the duties which were waiting for it. Flood was in England. Many of the Opposition members had remained in the country, expecting that the session would be unpropitious to them. Party politics being for the moment at rest, the attention of the House of Commons was drawn naturally to the various forms in which anarchy was showing itself. Roderick O'Connor must be taken in hand, or the example would spread. Mr. Ogle, of Wexford, enquired why the *Gazette* was full every day of accounts of ravished women? The Grand Jury of Dublin petitioned against the multitudes of whiskey shops, 'hellish dens' where the artisans were driven to madness.

Lord Luttrell said it was an insult to the under-

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, January 29. Secret

standing to talk of industry to a nation which had been drunk for a hundred years. Monk Mason enquired how gentlemen intended to stop drinking, when twelve or fifteen hundred private stills were at full work, protected and encouraged by the landlords on their own properties? The blame was thrown of course on the Government.

Fitzgibbon, speaking the truth always, however February, 1786 unpalatable it might be, told the House 'that the disorders of Ireland were traceable, not to Government, but to the supineness of the country gentlemen. Government ought never to interfere save when the ordinary means of keeping the peace had been tried and found ineffectual. The Irish gentry, when any act of violence occurred, folded their hands and applied to the Castle for a guard of soldiers.'

These preliminary debates were comparatively rational. The Duke congratulated himself on the recovered sanity of a now thoughtful and prudent Legislature. 'Scarce a troubled wave,' he said, 'appeared on the political surface.'<sup>1</sup> The Duke was prematurely sanguine. The state of the South required remedies more active than words. The Catholic bands having disarmed the Protestants, were grown so daring as to attack the soldiers. A party of the 20th Infantry, who were conducting a convoy of stores into Cork, were surprised on the road by a party of White-boys. They drove the assailants off at last, but only after a sharp skirmish. The obvious and immediately

<sup>1</sup> 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, February 27. Secret.'

necessary remedy was to hunt down and disarm these dangerous ruffians, but the magic shield of the defenders of Irish liberty was extended even over the Whiteboys. 'The Catholics being in possession of arms,' the Duke said, 'was a principle which struck at the vitals of the State. Yet every combination of men with arms was so entangled with the Volunteer system that to interfere anywhere directly and avowedly raised a stir in the entire body.'

If Ireland was not to relapse into the anarchy of the sixteenth century, a police of some kind was imperatively necessary, but a police in the imagination of the patriots was only a militia in disguise.

Fitzgibbon had given notice of his intention to introduce a Bill for the purpose. The patriots determined to oppose it; and to give time for their scattered forces to rally, Mr. Forbes,<sup>1</sup> in Flood's absence, brought on a preliminary skirmish on the old grievance of the Pension List. A scandal the Pension List had always been. Under the new Constitution corruption had increased, for the Lords and Commons had larger powers of giving trouble. This only was to be said in defence of so large a misappropriation of the Irish revenue, that to the general expenses of the empire Ireland contributed nothing. She had refused passionately to pay what she called tribute to the navy which protected her commerce. In the Pension List she was receiving, as a bribe to herself, a portion of what ought to have been employed for more

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<sup>1</sup> Member for Ratoath, in Meath.

honourable purposes, to prevent her Constitution from becoming such a nuisance that at all risks it must have been broken into pieces.<sup>1</sup> The principle was less at fault than the application. If some pensions might be applied with a show of reason to silence parties in the Irish House of Commons, there were others which were still given as the reward of services which would not bear publicity. The entire Irish list amounted now to a hundred thousand pounds a year, and as Curran said—

‘ This polyglot of wealth, this museum of curiosities, the Pension List, embraces every link in <sup>March,</sup> <sub>1786</sub> the human chain, every description of men, women, and children, from the exalted excellence of a Hawke or a Rodney to the debased situation of the lady that humbleth herself that she may be exalted.’

Such a blot on the escutcheon was an easy target for patriotic oratory. Mr. Forbes complained that the Irish pensions now exceeded the English. They were granted to overturn the independence of Parliament. Men were but men, and while ministers bribed, members of Parliament would be bribed. Grattan wound up a passionate speech by saying ‘ that if he should affirm that the Pension List was not a grievance, he would affirm in the face of his country an

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Young has some judicious remarks on the Pension List. Lord Shelburne, he says, once suggested to him that Ireland might make a good bargain for herself if she would consent to pay 700,000*l.*

a year into the Imperial treasury, as a final composition for the Pension List and the cost of her military establishment. But any such arrangement would have made her *tributary*.

impudent, insolent, and public lie.' It occurred neither to Forbes nor Grattan that the real mischief lay in conferring free institutions on a people who were confessedly liable to corrupt influences, and that if the members of the Irish Parliament had not been bribed by the ministers, they would have sold their votes to parties or purposes in methods more injurious to the State.

Scorning alike the bait which governed the movements of Irish politicians and the politicians themselves who railed at the system till their own turn came to be fed, Fitzgibbon flung the baseness which made corruption necessary in the teeth of those who were clamouring at it. 'Let me,' he said, 'ask gentlemen who exclaim so loudly against pensions, is there no man among them who has ever thought his own services deserving a pension? No. Not one. Is there no man who would accept a pension? No. Not one. Was there a man of the 110<sup>1</sup> who would accept a pension? No. Not one. When that Bill which threatened us with wealth and commerce was introduced was there a man of the said 110 that offered to desert for a pension? No. Not one. Is there now a person among them that would come over and vote with us for a pension? Not one, I am certain. And therefore when gentlemen speak against the folly and wickedness of bestowing pensions on members of Parliament, I am convinced they speak the genuine sentiments of their minds.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The minority which voted against the commercial propositions.

<sup>2</sup> *Irish Debates*, March 13, 1786.



The Attorney-General's language, however sarcastically true, was not conciliatory. Forbes pressed his division, and though he was beaten, the large numbers who voted on both sides<sup>1</sup> showed that the patriots had by this time rallied to their posts.

The vital question of the Police Bill now came on to try many things; among them to try Mr. Grattan's title to the name of a statesman. The Bill in itself was a small matter. If successful, the design was to extend its provisions, but for the present it applied only to Dublin, where the House of Commons had been half-a-dozen times invaded by the mob; where a tarring and feathering committee had maintained a reign of terror of six months; where the newspapers openly preached assassination, and where an Act of Parliament had been necessary to prevent enthusiastic patriots from slicing the tendons of British soldiers straying in the streets. In Dublin, if nowhere else, Parliament might be expected to agree to the necessity of a more efficient protection of the peace. The mayor and aldermen of the city of late years had been uniformly found wanting. The Attorney-General's Bill superseded their authority; it appointed instead seven paid magistrates to take the control of the local watchmen, and provided besides forty petty constables, mounted or on foot as need might require, with power to enter and search houses where there was reason to believe arms to be concealed.

To repress savagery, to prevent armed ruffians

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<sup>1</sup> 134 to 78.

from terrorizing over quiet citizens, is the first condition demanded of a Government which deserves the name. A country where girls might be ravished, soldiers hamstrung, and statesmen who objected to such proceedings held up as marks for assassins' poignards, was unfit for the habitation of human beings. Mr. Grattan, beyond all men, ought to have welcomed such a Bill, being himself responsible for the Constitution, and insisting, as he had always insisted, that Ireland had only to be made free to show herself worthy of freedom. Mr. Grattan estimated his duty differently. A state of anarchy had forwarded so materially Ireland's aspirations after emancipation, that he regarded measures for the preservation of order as an assault upon the national independence. The Bill was no sooner introduced than he declaimed against the two score constables as an army in disguise, and the measure itself as a covert attack on the Volunteers. He declared peremptorily that he would obstruct it at every turn.

Fitzgibbon, who was earnestly anxious to get his Bill through, at first quietly remonstrated. After the riots which had disgraced Dublin, he said that he had not anticipated that the establishment of a police would be objected to. A prisoner could not be taken through the streets without a guard of soldiers. The House of Commons had been taken by storm, and the mayor, though he had notice of the intended riot, had declared himself unable to prevent it. There was not a drunken weaver in the city who had not arms

concealed in his house. In the South the muskets of the Volunteers were in the hands of the Catholic rabble. The Bill, so far from being dangerous to liberty, was necessary for the protection of liberty, and he expressed a wish and hope to see a police established universally throughout the island.<sup>1</sup>

The opposition to the first reading, though loud and passionate, was not pressed to a division. When the Bill was brought on a second time, the battle began in earnest.

‘We are to have, then,’ said Grattan, ‘a mercenary army paid by the ministers, and differing only from the military because they will come to those meetings from which the soldiers with decency would retire. You knew the indignation of the House would be roused had you avowed the principles of your tumultuous army, your mercenary army, your ministerial army, which you have tricked into your Bill in disguise. You destroy the ancient charter of our city. You introduce a Bill to debauch her magistrates and dragoon her subjects.’

‘The clause,’ said another speaker, ‘which empowers the police to enter private houses to search for arms abolishes Magna Charta. If a man breaks into my house under this clause, and invades my privacy, I will meet him with Magna Charta in one hand and an instrument of death in the other. I declare before the living God no man shall enforce that clause in a house where I am master. One of us shall fall.

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, March 22.

The city came to the aid of her Parliamentary chiefs. Patriot actors thundered from a hundred platforms on the insidious design of introducing arbitrary power. The Corporation petitioned to be heard in opposition at the bar. A Whiteboy committee might enter the curate's house, and the friends of liberty saw nothing but a brave assertion of the indefeasible rights of man. For the police to enter the houses of conspirators and assassins was an outrage too intolerable to be endured. A motion was brought in to admit the Corporation's petition. Fitzgibbon rose to speak again, and this time not in a gentle mood.

'If an argument was wanting,' he said, 'to prove the necessity of the Bill, it is the frequency of these tumultuous assemblies called aggregate meetings, assembled by persons inimical to it, because it will restrain licentiousness and teach these worthy constitutional citizens to respect the laws of their country. They tell us they behold with the deepest concern the introduction of a Police Bill! I doubt it not. If passed into law, it will give additional influence to the Crown! I doubt it not. They think that it will prevent an opposition to the law, that it will preserve the public peace, and that there will be an end to that branch of the police the tarring and feathering committee. There will be an end to that worshipful company of glass-blowers, ruffians hired and paid by those worthy constitutional gentlemen to drag from his habitation any citizen that refuses to take such

oaths as they are pleased to administer, or who is suspected of a due regard to the laws of his country, and torment them with whipping and other marks of ignominy. Therefore I doubt not the plan of a regular police has greatly alarmed the worthy gentlemen who promote these meetings, as it will end that kind of opposition which they are ready always to give to the law. The petitioners desire to be heard by themselves or their counsel. I would rather hear themselves if I were to consider only my private amusement. The constitutional doctrines which I should hear would amply compensate my attention. For this House I have too much respect to consent that it be impeded in carrying on the national business.'<sup>1</sup>

Forbes started up in fury to enquire if the Attorney-General meant to arrest the High Sheriff who had signed the petition. Grattan said the speech to which he had listened was a lampoon on the city. Mr. Brownlow was frightened at the disrespect which Fitzgibbon was showing to the Corporation. Fitzgibbon knew what he was doing. Irish sedition was dangerous only to those who were afraid of it. The petition was refused admission. The Bill itself was passed. Mr. Orde, who took part in the debate, thus reported the result :—

'We have carried our Police Bill for Dublin, which we may by and by extend to the country. Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, March 25, 1786.

Grattan thought fit very hastily to risk the trial of his ascendancy, and with most earnest solicitude attempted to create alarm. His success was so very bad, and so contrary to his expectation, that he appeared much mortified, and was at length entirely silenced by the Attorney-General, who rebuked him for the petulance and weakness of his opposition with much dignity.<sup>1</sup>

The defeat disheartened the Opposition for the remainder of the session. The new police were <sup>April,</sup> established in Dublin, and pending further mea- <sup>1786</sup> sures in the same direction, the Secretary introduced a Bill for the better protection of the clergy in the South. Nothing effective, however, was really possible without more vigorous action than the Administration could as yet venture upon. Mr. Rowley, M.P. for Meath, a Right Honourable and a person of some distinction, proposed that after the word 'clergy' should be read 'and all other persons.' Orde enquired if this was meant as a jest. The clergy were weak, and were generally strangers to the country in which they were resident. The landlords, if it was to them that Mr. Rowley referred, were the parties themselves most to blame. The resident gentry, to their disgrace and shame, refused to help the clergy, in the hope that tithes might be abolished. Mr. Ogle (himself a large landowner), replying to the charge against the clergy of extortion, insisted that 'the great extor-

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Evan Nepean, March 30, 1786. Most private.'

tioners were the landowners themselves.' 'There was hardly an estate which was not let to the highest penny or above its value.' 'The tenant felt the oppression, and not knowing where to turn for relief, fell on the clergy as the weakest and least protected.'

On the other hand, the abuses from pluralist and absentee rectors were really flagrant and enormous. To pass a law which would assist the tithe-proctors was to perpetuate a frightful evil; and even Fitzgibbon, who hated injustice as heartily as Grattan, was obliged to withhold his consent from the Government proposal. He had himself, he said, known a hundred and twenty processes for tithes to be going on at once in the county of Limerick against poor Catholic peasants. The clergy, he said, must be provided for by some less oppressive means. The tithes must be commuted into a charge upon the lands, and pending further consideration he advised that the present Bill should be withdrawn.

Fitzgibbon was right in principle. The Secretary consented, and the session ended; yet the effect was to leave the clergy exposed for another season to the Whiteboys' devilry. These gentry had been prudently quiet while Parliament was sitting. The prorogation was a signal that their victims were again in their hands, and the failure of the Protection Act was taken as a confession that justice was on their side. Notices were posted on church and chapel doors, limiting the tithes which the peasantry were allowed

to pay, and under pretence of impartiality they connected with tithes the dues of the priests.<sup>1</sup> Threatening letters were addressed to the <sup>August</sup> country gentlemen, written evidently by men of education and ability. The war was carried on with a regularity of movement and purpose which showed that it was guided by organized authority. The few prisoners occasionally taken refused, as usual, to betray their leaders. They pleaded that strangers had come to them at night, and had sworn them to their work with the most horrible threats if they disobeyed; while 'too many of the gentry and wealthy farmers, looking to their immediate interest in the reduction of tithes, if they did not encourage the Whiteboys, declined to take part against them.' 'It was strange,' as Lord Sydney observed, 'that they should not understand that by destroying the provision for the Protestant clergy they were endangering the stability of the Protestant interest.'<sup>2</sup>

So very serious was the aspect of Munster by the middle of the summer, that the Viceroy even thought of re-assembling Parliament. His special fear was that the movement against tithes should extend to Ulster, and produce the union between Protestant Dissenters and Catholics, which the madness of ecclesiastical legislation had made a too formidable

<sup>1</sup> 'The manner in which the insurgents have connected in the general attack the Popish priests with the Protestant clergy is, I am persuaded, intended to conceal their real drift.—The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, August 1786.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Lord Sydney to the Duke of Rutland, September 6, 1786.'



probability.<sup>1</sup> The Privy Council would give no advice. The Viceroy had no force to rely upon but the British regiments, and to employ British soldiers as policemen was to raise the Whiteboys into a patriot army. The outrages at length became so appalling that Lord Luttrell was sent down with a detachment of troops to see what he could do. His difficulty was to discover his enemy. The Whiteboys were everywhere and nowhere. The car driver on the road, or the peasant digging potatoes in the field at its side, the shopman behind the village counter, or the trusted servant in the mansion or parsonage, were the same men who at night were carding tithe-proctors and banishing sleep from the bedsides of the clergy and their families. Prisoners were taken only to be dismissed for want of evidence. 'The gentlemen and farmers,' reported Luttrell, 'everywhere show a singular sympathy with them. Petty juries will not convict. Grand juries are strangely apathetic, and willing to receive the Whiteboys' petitions.'<sup>2</sup>

The spell was broken at last, by the same means which had ended the tarring and feathering in Dublin. Lord Tyrone had arrested a couple of Whiteboys in Waterford, and by great exertion had obtained evidence to compel their conviction. Their offence was not capital. One was sentenced to be imprisoned, the other to be publicly flogged.

In a wholesome state of society neglect of duty

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<sup>1</sup> 'Rutland to Sydney, August 1786.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Report of General Lord Luttrell, September 21, 1786.' S. P. O.

would be punished as severely as crime. The commissioned officer who deserts his post or allows those under him to fall into disorder by want of discipline is justly cashiered. The absentee landlords and clergy who drove the peasants mad by extortion, and gave them guidance in return neither for body nor soul, deserved probably, in nature's court of equity, a place at the cart's tail by the Whiteboy's side. The people were wronged. The law gave them no redress; and when they attempted wild justice for themselves, they were handed over to the executioners. An unequal balance always yields an unsound result; and if justice cannot be distributed evenly—if the whip or gallows are reserved for the poor offender, while the rich is left to his fine houses and three courses a day—the social wound remains unhealed. In proportion as the resentment of the favoured section of society is strong against the rude redressers of general injuries, so among their fellow-sufferers the general sympathy will be on their side, and will regard them as soldiers suffering for a popular cause. No State, however, can permit the wild justice to continue which never strikes the true criminals. Harmless curates and their wives could not be allowed to be torn from their beds, sliced with knives, or torn with briars. Whiteboyism had to be put down. The convicted Whiteboy was therefore to be flogged. But who was to inflict the flogging? The common officers refused, though with loss of place and salary. High rewards were offered. The debtors' prison was searched for

some one who would do the work in return for liberty. Not a man could be found. The High Sheriff was the person responsible for the execution of the sentence.<sup>1</sup> He determined that the law should not become a jest; and, since none else would do it, he himself with his own hand flogged the prisoner through the streets of Waterford.

The effect was once more instantaneous. The reign of terror was over. Timid lords and gentlemen  
 September took courage from Musgrave's example. Well-meaning farmers and peasants, seeing that they might count upon protection, came forward with information. Lord Kenmare, though himself a Catholic, hunted down the insurgents of Kerry, 'dragging them from the very altars of the Popish chapels to which they had flown for concealment and protection.'<sup>2</sup> A company of soldiers, attacked by a gang of Whiteboys, in Clare, fired into them, and four were killed. Others were betrayed and taken, and were sent in shiploads to Botany Bay. Luttrell, whose mission threatened at first to be a hopeless failure, returned to Dublin in October, leaving the  
 October country quieted, the clergy breathing freely again in their glebe houses, and the Whiteboys prepared to wait 'till their complaints could be considered by Parliament.'<sup>3</sup>

A respite had been gained, but a respite only. Their arms were still in their hands, and commotions would

<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Musgrave, notorious afterwards as the historian of the Rebellion of 1798.

Lord Sydney, September 26, 1786. Secret.'

<sup>2</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to

<sup>3</sup> 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, October 29, 1786. Secret.'

infallibly break out again if Parliament failed to find a remedy. The Viceroy declared himself 'unable to offer an opinion what was fittest to be done in so delicate and complicated a question.' He rather hinted than advised the commutation system, to which Fitzgibbon had pointed as the fittest solution.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, October 29, 1786. Secret.'

## SECTION III.

THE disorders were suspended in Munster only to January, 1787, break out in other places. The revolution of '82 and the establishment of political liberty had been the signal for the bursting loose of Irish ideas. An armed rising in Galway in January was with difficulty suppressed by Colonel St. George, who seized the ring-leader at the head of his gang. The Viceroy found that 'Parliament only could put an absolute period to these disgraceful commotions,'<sup>1</sup> and relinquishing reluctantly the system of biennial sessions which had allowed hitherto a twelvemonth's respite from agitation, he found himself obliged to recall the Legislature to its functions at the opening of the new year. The Irish people had to be taught that freedom (whatever its theoretic value to them) did not mean anarchy and midnight assassination, and the starvation of the clergy by the refusal of their lawful salaries. Remedial measures might be eventually necessary; but the leading gentry, alive to the disgrace of the country, agreed that effective steps must be first adopted to restore respect for the law. They promised privately to support the duke in carrying a Conspiracy Act, and in providing more effective officers to maintain peace than the supine and cowardly magistracy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, November 10, 1786.'  
S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Duke of Rutland to Lord Sydney, January 25, 1787.'

On the last of January Fitzgibbon laid before the House of Commons the outlines of the measure which he intended to propose. Combinations to commit capital crimes had been hitherto only misdemeanours until purpose became act. The Attorney-General's Bill made conspiracy into felony. It contained clauses enabling the Executive to disregard Constitutional forms in dealing with what was virtually rebellion. The Whiteboy Association had commenced in a Catholic chapel. Through the chapels it was propagated. The chapel altars had been the sanctuary of the criminal when the soldiers were on his track. It was proposed to empower the magistrates at their discretion to destroy any Catholic 'meeting-house,' in which tumultuous assemblies had been held or unlawful oaths had been administered, and to forbid the re-erection of any chapel so demolished within three years.

Fitzgibbon was Irish born—Irish of the very Irish. He knew the people. He knew the working of the popular creed. He knew that if the priests were not to command, they must be broken in and forced to obey. Though he was stern where sternness was imperative, no one was more conscious than he of the wrongs under which the country suffered. No one ever described those wrongs more effectively, or laid the lash more heavily on the right shoulders. In the speech with which he introduced the Bill, he said:—

'I am well acquainted with the Province of Munster, and I know that it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable tenantry of that

Province. I know that the unhappy tenantry are ground to powder by relentless landlords. I know that far from being able to give the clergy their just dues, they have not food and raiment for themselves; the landlord grasps the whole. Sorry I am to add that, not satisfied with their present extortion, some landlords have been so base as to instigate the insurgents to rob the clergy of their tithes, not in order to alleviate the distresses of the tenantry, but that they might add the clergy's share to the cruel rackrents already paid. Sir, I fear it will require the utmost ability of Parliament to come to the root of these evils. The poor people of Munster live in a more abject state of poverty than human nature can be supposed able to bear. Their miseries are intolerable; but they do not originate with the clergy, nor can the Legislature stand by and see them take the redress into their own hands. Nothing can be done for their benefit while the country remains in a state of anarchy.' <sup>1</sup>

The introduction of Fitzgibbon's Bill was the occasion of one of the most instructive debates which was ever heard in the Irish House of Commons. To the patriots, who believed that more liberty was the remedy which Ireland required, it was naturally odious. Henry Flood was gone. He had forsaken his ungrateful country, and transferred his eloquence to a sphere where it was less appreciated than even at home. He was now a Member of the British Parliament. But his place was adequately filled, so far as

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, January 31, 1787.

opposition was needed to every measure that could strengthen authority. Mr. Burgh called the Bill a libel on the House and country and on human nature, infamous in principle and motive, and disgraceful to the community where it could find a moment's toleration. Grattan outdid himself in passion and brilliancy of invective. 'Ireland needed coercion, it was true, but it needed the coercion of tenderness, the coercion of justice, the coercion which should appeal to the generous, warm, and noble temperament of the Irish people. The Attorney-General's Bill breathed of nothing but blood. It was a leaf from the code of Draco. The clause for the destruction of the Catholic chapels was a gross expression of insolent and gratuitous intolerance.'

The chapel provision found no favour. Country gentlemen were not prepared for a war of religion, and if embodied in the Act it would be as inoperative as the repealed penal laws. Fitzgibbon yielded to the general sentiment. 'If the Popish meeting-houses,' he said, 'were mere places of combination to rob the Protestant clergy, they ought to be prostrated.' But 'as he desired his Bill to be passed unanimously, he consented to withdraw that feature.'

On the rest of the Bill the discussion went on fiercely as before. Some members wished to confine it to Cork, Limerick, and Tipperary. But it was not a measure intended only to affect the ignorant peasantry of the South. It was directed against the universal lawlessness of all ranks and creeds — against the



Ulster Protestant peer as well as starving Catholic cottier.

Lashing out indiscriminately, Fitzgibbon called attention to a recent characteristic proceeding of the same nobleman who had sent so many Protestant recruits to Washington's army. 'The North,' he said, 'has not been free from disorder. An outrageous attack has lately been made on the property of Baron Yelverton. Four hundred ruffians, headed by an engineer, who professed publicly that he was employed by a certain absentee peer, who perhaps has injured this country more than any other man ever did, at midnight, near Belfast, made an irruption into the works which Baron Yelverton had erected to repel the tide, and where he had erected several houses and stores at a great expense. They destroyed the barriers against the sea, and did damage which a large sum will not repair. For four hours they worked, and then, lest their ardour should be damped, their commander, the engineer, led them into the town of Belfast, where, having dosed them with whiskey, he led them to the charge again. The magistrates saw this, but did not disperse the mob; and now that the injured man sues for redress, the offender avails himself of the situation, skulks behind privilege, and refuses to plead.'

The discussion on the Insurrection Act spread into collateral subjects, and the whole situation of Ireland, in its social relations, came up night after night for review.

Mr. Browne, a native of America,<sup>1</sup> remarked on the nature of Irish tenures. 'Elsewhere,' he said, 'landed title was purchase, in Ireland it was forfeiture.' 'The old proprietor kept alive the memory of his claim. Property in Ireland resembled the thin soil of volcanic countries spread lightly over subterranean fires.'<sup>2</sup> Religion was thus vitally connected with the land question; and in Dr. Curry's history, which had just been published, the Protestant gentry were represented as invaders, usurpers, violators of treaties and public faith, the eldest born of perfidy and ingratitude. It was no wonder that with such impressions the Irish abhorred both landlord and parson.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Member for the University.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Young had just written: 'It is a fact that in most parts of Ireland the descendants of the old owners, the heirs of an estate, are always known. They regularly transmit, by testamentary deed, the memorial of their right to those estates which once belonged to their families.'

<sup>3</sup> Of all the varieties of negligence with which Irish interests have been treated, none has been more mischievous than the tacit indifference with which Dr. Curry's legend has been allowed to pass into accepted history. Dr. Curry represents the rebellion of 1641 as having been instigated or allowed by the Puritans, who wanted an excuse to rob the Irish of their estates. He represents the massacre as a fiction, invented by fraud and supported by perjured wit-

nesses. The truth being, according to him, that the Protestants began to murder the Catholics, and that the Catholics took arms in self-defence. Was this account a correct one? If it was, the forfeiture and the Act of Settlement were the most atrocious injuries ever inflicted on the weak by the strong. The resentment of the Irish would be as legitimate as it ought to be undying till the fullest reparation had been made. How vain, how mendacious, how absurd the story is, was shown long ago in the *Fiction Unmasked* of Dr. Harris. But Harris is forgotten, Temple and Borlase are unread or denounced as liars; while Dr. Curry's version has possession of the field, and, being unquestioned, is accepted by the Irish Catholics as true. English statesmen themselves half believe it, and, forgetting the alternative, that if

Grattan brought up the miseries of the tithe payers in two glittering speeches. He charged the clergy with extortion, and with eloquent platitudes contrasted the modern well-paid incumbent with the barefooted Apostle. If fine speeches could have healed chronic wounds, Ireland would soon have taken leave of her sorrows. But the medium which she needed was truth; and Grattan's impassioned sentences might possess every other title to admiration, but true they were not. Fitzgibbon repeated that the Munster peasants were 'in a state of oppression, abject poverty, sloth, dirt, and misery, not to be equalled in the world.' The tithes might be an aggravation of their sufferings, but the real source of those sufferings lay in the middlemen, 'who, having no inheritance, no education, no profession, ground the people to powder.' If tithes were abolished, as Grattan desired, the people would be no better off 'while those harpies were allowed to prey on them.' The landlords, who ought to have protected them, handed them over to middlemen, the middlemen sublet to annual tenants at a rack-rent; and if the provision for the clergy was taken away, the effect would only be that they would exact another pound an acre for the potato grounds. Mr. Browne vindicated the clergy from Grattan's personal charges. If they were guilty of extortion, they had no benefit of clergy to screen them.

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the Irish Catholics were not guilty | they were violently taken, talk  
 in 1641 their estates ought to be | blandly of their regret for past  
 restored to the nation from which | oppression.

The courts were open and they could be prosecuted; the absence of attempt at legal remedy, and the recourse to violence, proved their innocence more than a thousand allegations. 'I wish,' he said, with the eloquence of truth, 'I wish you had seen them as I have seen them, with ruined hopes and broken hearts, despondently sitting amidst the blasted comforts of declining life. Is your pity confined to the peasant? Suspected pity whose handmaid is interest! They embraced a profession on the public faith plighted by you—plighted by the Constitution. You enticed them to purchase education, and with it keener sensibility. Is it safe to sport with property? Is it policy to teach the mob logic? You say the clergy do not reside to do their duty. It is not generally true. But do you do your duty? Have you no duty to your country? to your friends? to yourselves? Do you do your duty? You say the clergy have too much. Did you ever hear of Agrarian laws? Do you think it easy to persuade the famished beggars that it is right for one man to have ten thousand a year and another nothing?

Fitzgibbon finally wound up the subject in words which, few as they were, contained the whole secret of Ireland's wretchedness.

'The right hon. gentleman' (Mr. Grattan) 'has said we do not know the people of the South. I apprehend rather the right hon. gentleman does not know them. I have lived among them almost my whole life; he but a few weeks. I am very closely

and have been very closely attached to them. I will again state what I mentioned before. It is the duty of the landlord to protect his tenants. If landlords would take the trouble to know their tenants, and not leave them in the hands of rapacious agents and middlemen, we should hear no more of discontents. The great source of all these miseries arises from the neglect of those whose duty and interest it is to protect them.'

The perversity of history has stamped Fitzgibbon as the reviler of his country, and the enemy of the race from which he sprung. The Irish peasant never had a truer friend, nor Ireland a nobler patriot.

In debates on these questions, and in the practical legislation arising out of them, the entire session was busily consumed. Alarmed by the spirit which was abroad, the House of Commons abstained from obstructing the Government or making frequent demonstrations in favour of Irish ideas. They listened to Grattan's rhetoric, but they allowed Fitzgibbon to guide them. Grattan himself would perhaps have been less violent had he not been aware that the temper of the majority would be proof for the present against mere declamation. Three Bills were passed of a character which showed that in ordinary circumstances the Parliament was equal to its responsibilities. The Insurrection Bill, or Tumultuous Assemblies Bill, as it finally became law, though it lacked the clause for the destruction of the chapels, was a formidable measure. It embodied in the first place the provisions

of the Riot Act, hitherto unknown in Ireland. The magistrates had power to order every meeting of more than twelve persons to disperse. Persons so ordered, who disobeyed, were liable to be shot. Attacks on clergymen, or on Churches of the Establishment, were made felony. Conspiracies, terrorism, administering unlawful oaths, seizure of arms, interfering to silence witnesses, all these were made felony, with death for a punishment. For combination to deprive clergy of their tithes the penalties were fine, imprisonment, and the whip.<sup>1</sup>

No plan could as yet be formed for the commutation of tithes. The clergy, who for a year had received either nothing or so much only as the Whiteboy Committee was pleased to sanction, were not to be allowed to starve. A second Act was passed giving them power to recover their dues by civil bill at the assizes, and an extremely significant provision was inserted, that 'on the hearing of any civil bill under this Act no jury should be empanelled nor should any appeal be received.'<sup>2</sup>

Laws were still nothing without force to execute them. A third measure gave power to the Viceroy for three years (should he see occasion) to extend to the whole country, or part of it, the provisions of the Dublin Police Bill, to appoint a Protestant constabulary in every barony in the kingdom, superseding the corrupt or incapable local officers, and a body of stipendiary magistrates to assist or take the place of the

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Statutes*, 1787, cap. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* cap. 36.

justices of the peace.<sup>1</sup> Had this last measure been carried fully out, it would have provided 3000 policemen, 520 chief constables, and a trained and competent magistracy to direct them. Unfortunately, it was permissive only, intended only as a force in reserve, and in its permissive form was too weak to resist the storm of vituperation to which it was exposed. It was called a conspiracy against liberty, a contrivance to increase the patronage of Government, and change the Constitution. Fitzgibbon's powerful intellect overbore the clamour. For the present session, and the session which followed it, the Irish representatives had the courage to emancipate themselves from the eloquent agitators, whose panacea for misery was the cant of political independence. For two years of their existence the Irish Parliament addressed themselves in earnest to the active sores of the Commonwealth, and the country gentlemen endured to be told of their own shortcomings, in language which even then if taken seriously to heart might have changed the face of the country. *Si sic omnia!* It was but a lucid interval, and another mad fit was imminent. Meanwhile the incendiary leaders discovered that further tumults would be dangerous. In the face of Grattan's resistance, an Act had been passed which made their occupation death, and means had been provided which, if they gave further provocation, might perhaps turn the threat into reality. Irish disturbance is systematic. It proceeds on a principle and is governed by word of

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Statutes*, cap. 40.

command. The order went out for the Whiteboys to resume their character of quiet citizens till the Irish legislators should be again inflated with their recurring delirium. The Duke of Rutland went on progress through Munster in the summer of 1787, where he was received with enthusiasm. Trade began <sup>1787</sup> to grow. The commercial relations between England and Ireland resolved themselves in detail without further convulsions; and the Volunteers, the fountain of so much poisonous hope, the symbol of so much childish infatuation, flickered out and for a time disappeared.

In the October of the same year the Duke also who had brought the ship into harbour was attacked by fever in the Phoenix Park, and died after a few days' illness amidst universal mourning.



## SECTION IV.

THE Rutland Administration, taken as a whole, had been the most successful which Ireland had known for a century. For the first time the anarchic spirit had been encountered and beaten back, and the partial establishment of a police in the teeth of Grattan's opposition had given his Constitution a chance of surviving the extravagances of its author. Success, unfortunately, had been bought at the usual price, and the measures essential to the very life of the country had added 20,000*l.* a year to the wonderful Pension List. Corruption in Parliament implied corruption everywhere. When Peers sold their influence, and members of the Lower House their votes, subordinate officials were not likely to be more scrupulous than their superiors. The customs, the excise, the ordnance, the treasury, were still plundered with but faint disguise. The public stores were preyed upon in the open day; supplies were charged for goods which had never been received. The smugglers landed their cargoes while the revenue officers were conveniently absent. Government clerks in Dublin, with salaries of a hundred a year, had their town and country houses, and their shining establishments of servants. Beautiful conditions, for which the one excuse was that Government could in no other way be carried on. Very evidently to an unprejudiced looker-on Fitzgibbon's

measures were no more than sedatives. The quiet was but, as Mr. Browne described it, a thin coat of ashes spread over subterranean fires.

The Duke of Rutland's successor was the Marquis of Buckingham, who as Lord Temple already had experience of Ireland, and had been universally popular there. Temple, during his brief administration, had thrown himself into the spirit of '82. He had been recalled as more inclined to yield to Irish sentiment than had been considered safe at a period of excitement. Disorder having disappeared with the Tumultuous Assemblies Bill, and the dissolution of the Volunteers, it was thought a gracious act to restore a Viceroy whose removal had been so much regretted. Lord Buckingham was received with enthusiasm. The horses were taken from his carriage when he landed, and he was drawn through the streets by the people amidst universal acclamation. They had mistaken his character, and his favour was as brief as the loss of it was honourable. The Duke of Rutland, while peremptory in action, had been gracious and generous. His expenditure had been lavish. The hospitalities of the Castle had been magnificent. He had been personally brilliant and accomplished, and while bent chiefly on suppressing Whiteboys and maintaining the public peace, he had not troubled himself to look too curiously into the methods by which public officials maintained their fine appearance in Dublin. The liberality of Lord Buckingham was confined to his politics. He cut down extravagance at the

Castle, and he was considered mean. He was reserved and distant in manner, while Rutland had been accessible to everyone. He had an Englishman's contempt for meanness, and received the sycophants who pressed about him to ask for favours with cold distaste. Worse than all, he instituted an immediate enquiry into the departmental frauds. The clerks were called on suddenly to surrender their books and keys and produce the outstanding balances. The result was a tragi-comedy. It was as if the police had come unexpected upon a gang of forgers. Some fled out of the country, some cut their throats, some were dismissed with ignominy. Lord Townshend, who had found the same practices on foot, had endeavoured to make them impossible by altering the constitution of the Board of Revenue, increasing the number of commissioners, and introducing Englishmen among them. The patriotic reformers had resented the enclosure of their favourite domain. They had never wearied of denouncing the change. They had succeeded before '82 in replacing the old system. Lord Buckingham, at the outset of his Administration, found himself obliged to revert to Townshend's principles, and at once made determined enemies of every patriot and every friend of corruption.

He was unfortunate every way, for the lawlessness suppressed in the South was now breaking out in another form in Ulster. The reader will remember the Antrim evictions, where so many thousand Protestant families were expelled from their farms in favour of Catholics who outbid them in the market. The ill-

feeling against the intruders, which had appeared first in the Hearts of Steel, had continued smouldering under the surface. The Presbyterian farmers resented the presence of the new-comers in a country which, before their appearance, had been almost exclusively Protestant. Resentment had been embittered by the declaration of the Dungannon Volunteers in favour of Catholic emancipation. The Volunteers represented the Americanized liberalism of the manufacturing towns. The Calvinistic inhabitants of the country districts retained the traditional abhorrence of Popery, and gloried in the recollection of the Defence of Derry. Quarrels had thus arisen and local fights. The Catholics, in spite of the law, were seen to possess arms, gathered from the stores of the disbanded Volunteer corps; and when it became known in Ulster that the Catholic Whiteboys had disarmed every Protestant in the South, and were robbing and ill-treating the Protestant clergy, a Protestant Association formed itself in Antrim under the name of Peep-of-day Boys, to search the Catholic houses in turn, and take away their weapons in retaliation. The Catholics, who were unable to recognize that if they ill-treated others they might perhaps be ill-treated themselves, made the air ring with their complaints. The popular party in Parliament, who had acquiesced patiently when the Whiteboys were disarming the Protestants, were indignant when Protestants deprived Catholics of pikes and muskets which they were not entitled to keep. The Northern Catholics, backed by Dublin patriotism, organized themselves

into an antagonistic association of 'Defenders;' and Ulster on Temple's arrival was drifting rapidly into a war of religion.

In the winter there were again symptoms that the mischief in the South was not extinguished. The permissive County Police Bill remained an unfulfilled threat; and though the outrages were less flagrant, the help of Parliament had to be called in a second time, to enable the clergy to recover their arrears of tithe.

Lord Buckingham required all his vigour and all his intelligence to encounter the work which lay before him. He began well in attacking official swindling. He was less careful to avoid giving the swindlers an opportunity of retaliating on himself. Soon after his arrival, the most valuable sinecure in Ireland<sup>1</sup> falling vacant, he gave it to his brother, Mr. Grenville. The existence of such offices in so poor a country was inexcusable. The bestowal of them on English favourites and politicians was among the most mischievous of Irish abuses, and for a reforming Viceroy to set so gross a precedent was an imprudence amounting to a crime.

Thus it was that before Lord Buckingham had been six months at the Castle he was as much detested as he had been adored at his coming. The disasters in the country were charged to his incapacity. The misuse of his patronage had alienated

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<sup>1</sup> The office of 'Chief Remembrancer,' whatever that might have been, worth in itself 4000*l.* a year, with extensive patronage attached.

the honest and gave the dishonest an occasion for misrepresenting him when he acted rightly; and by the summer of 1788 the desire was universal that he would take himself away.<sup>1</sup> At this moment there now rose, without warning, a fresh political hurricane.

<sup>1</sup> No better illustration can be given, either of Lord Buckingham's unpopularity or of the character of the Irish Parliament, than a description which Sir John Blaquiere was allowed to give, unrebuked, in the House of Commons, of the representative of his sovereign:—

‘An imperious, reserved, supercilious man, with mean talents, but an abundant stock of self-sufficiency—who, like the Persian monarch,

would hide his royalty to increase the veneration of the world. A man whose disdainful meanness led him to be haughty to the humble, and humble to the stout; who was so haughty and arrogant, so hateful to the people of the other country, as not to be able to procure the meanest office in the Cabinet, and who, to be got rid of, was sent away from being the pest of his own country to be the scourge of this.’—*Irish Debates*, 1789.

## SECTION V.

THE summer of 1788 was spent by Mr. Grattan in England. He was introduced to the Prince of Wales, to the mutual satisfaction of both. The heir of the throne, though unbeloved at home, was esteemed greatly in the Sister Island. 'The Irish,' says Mr. Plowden, 'admired prowess, generosity, and magnanimity, as they despised and detested everything mean, sordid, and suspicious.' Therefore, by a singular process of reasoning, they bestowed their affections on a person whose prowess had been shown in fields of dishonour, whose generosity was profligate extravagance, whose magnanimity was indifference to obligations. Mr. Grattan had been received also at the Whig club with the distinction due to the Emancipator of Ireland. He had listened to the complaints of the Whig statesmen against Pitt and the King; and the Whig statesmen, forgetting their own experience in 1782, had been ready in turn to take up Irish discontent into the scope of their political campaign. From Paris came the inspiring news of fast-approaching revolution, while the singular illness which was growing upon George the Third was exciting hopes in the Whig heart to which loyalty forbade them to give utterance. The visit was over. Mr. Grattan was returning, at the beginning of October, to Ireland, and had reached Chester on his way, when he was

overtaken by a message which recalled him instantly to London. The King's disorder was taking the form of settled delirium, and a Regency seemed all but inevitable. The Crown only had kept Mr. Pitt in office. The assumption of the royal authority by the Prince of Wales would imply a change of ministry and measures. Now at last there was a hope of shaking off Fitzgibbon and the corrupt majority which supported him, and of securing for Ireland those broad reforms which would make her independence at last into a fact.

The English Parliament stood prorogued till the 20th of November. When the day arrived there was no longer a question of the King's <sup>November</sup> condition. The Houses adjourned for a fortnight. The physicians were examined in the interval before the Privy Council, and declared that although likely to recover, his majesty was for the present incapable of discharging his functions. On the 4th of December Parliament met as a convention to consider the steps which were to be taken. A committee of both Houses was first appointed to re-examine the physicians. On the presentation of the report all parties agreed that there must be a Regency, and that the Prince of Wales was the person on whom the office must devolve. All parties were not agreed, however, on the conditions on which the Prince was to enter upon it. Fox asserted that he would succeed of natural right to all powers which his father exercised. Pitt insisted that he would receive his powers at the hands of



Parliament, under such limitations and restrictions as Parliament might be pleased to impose. Meeting at once Fox's claim of right, he proposed and carried a resolution that it was the duty of the Lords and Commons to provide a substitute pending the incapacity of the Sovereign. The Prince of Wales having declined a personal interview, Pitt wrote formally to  
December inform him of the Parliamentary resolutions, and to state that he was prepared to propose the nomination of his Royal Highness to the Regency on certain terms which he specified.

The Regent, though he was to have power to choose his own advisers—power, therefore, to dismiss Pitt from his councils—was to be prevented from squandering the royal property, to be prohibited from granting offices for life, and from creating new peers. He was to be thus disabled from rewarding and promoting his social and political favourites, while the care of the King's person and the management of the household were to be wholly reserved to the Queen.

The Prince's reply was said to have been written by Burke. It was in a tone of indignant resentment, reproaching Pitt with creating divisions in the royal family, and taunting him with trying the experiment whether royalty was a necessary feature in the executive government. He did not refuse to accept conditions, but he reserved his final assent till they were presented to him by Parliament. Pitt introduced his Regency Bill, but the proceeding with it was dilatory.

The physicians were again examined in January. Though the King was then no better, they reported that he was certainly not worse, and the forms of Parliament continued to prolong the crisis.

So matters went in England. In the Sister Island they were assuming a complexion singularly different. Irish animosity has misrepresented with its usual perverseness the conduct of Lord Buckingham. His letters fortunately survive to show that he was exceptionally studious of Ireland's supposed rights, and careful of her silliest susceptibilities. The absurd haste with which the Constitution of '82 had been hurried through had left the contingency which had occurred, like many others, unprovided for. By the Constitution the Sovereign of England was to be Sovereign of Ireland. Whether, if England changed her Sovereign, Ireland was bound to follow the example was a question which, in spite of the experience of 1689, was supposed to be left open. Ireland at all events conceived she had a right to elect her own Regent on her own terms. She was anxious to do it quickly, that she might show her independence, by anticipating England. She was anxious also to show her spirit and gain the Prince's favour, by dispensing with the ignoble stipulations by which Pitt sought to restrict his generosity.

Lord Buckingham has been accused of having obstructed the meeting of the Irish Parliament to the latest moment; he, in fact, regretted that he had no constitutional power to call it together

before the time to which it was prorogued.<sup>1</sup> Immediately on hearing of the King's condition he warned the Cabinet of 'the extreme jealousy which might be looked for in the most loyal Irish hearts if England should appear to encroach on their Constitution by dictating their action.' But so little was he prepared for the extravagant course on which they were about to enter, that his chief anxiety was to leave them free, and he undertook for them that 'any measures taken in England would be adopted without difficulty.' Had the Regency Bill been passed in England with the rapidity which was at first expected, the Irish patriots would have lost an opportunity of displaying their independence, but the blame, whatever  
 February its first amount, would not have rested on the Viceroy. Lord Buckingham at any rate they had determined to drive from the country. Grattan remained in London till January, when the establishment of the Regency was thought to be a question of days. The Whig leader, anticipating immediate accession to office, had promised him that Lord Buckingham should be recalled, that Lord Spenser should take his place; that he should have his Pension Bill, his Place Bill, and his Reform Bill, and be no longer obstructed by the political janissaries of the Castle. He in turn had undertaken for Ireland that she would elect the Prince of Wales Regent, with no ungenerous restrictions, and that she would accept Fox's view of

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, November 23, 1789. Most secret.'

natural right. For himself, perhaps, he meant further to loosen another rivet in the chain of Ireland's dependency. With these promises and these views Grattan hastened back to Ireland, to be in time for the opening of Parliament on the 5th of February.

The Speech from the Throne announced the King's illness, and promised attested copies of the examination of the physicians before the Committee of the British Parliament to explain the nature of it. On the lightest word the explosive material was ready to kindle. George Ponsonby sprung instantly to his feet, and enquired by whom these copies were signed. Yells from the gallery drowned the answer. Dennis Brown and Mr. Griffiths, throwing into words the meaning of the uproar, exclaimed that it was derogatory to their dignity, it undermined the foundations of their independence, to receive reports from the Parliament of another country on a subject relating to the rights of the King of Ireland.

The patriot spirit was all that could be wished, but it was starting off upon a wrong scent. If the report was refused the royal physicians must be sent for to attend in person, and Grattan's object was to take time by the forelock and hurry on the action of the Irish Parliament before the English Act should be passed, to become their precedent. The huntsman called back the too eager hounds.

'The evidence,' he said, 'was amply sufficient.' 'Such objections would result only in making the measures of another assembly the rule of their

conduct.' 'They needed no model from Great Britain.' He invited the Irish Legislature to proceed instantly in the nomination of their Regent. The meaning of this was of course transparent. Fitzgibbon protested against haste, 'which might dissolve the single tie which now connected Ireland with Great Britain.' Mr. Fitzherbert, the Secretary, insisted on the propriety of Ireland following England's example in so serious a matter. Every packet might bring news of the passing of the Regency Bill, and he begged for a few days' delay. After an irregular debate, which degenerated into personal abuse of the Viceroy, George Ponsonby moved that the House resolve itself into a committee for instant action. The grounds on which the Government desired delay were with the patriots grounds for precipitation. The Parliament was again wild with the vanity of nationality; and though Fitzgibbon warned the House that whoever maintained that the proceedings on the Regency might differ in the two countries was a very bold man, Ponsonby's motion was carried. In the expectation of Lord Spenser's arrival, the Government phalanx had already dissolved, and the flock of members whose votes were at the disposition of the Viceroy had already transferred them by anticipation to Lord Buckingham's successor. On the 11th the committee was formed, with Sir Lucius O'Brien in the chair, and the Clerk of the House, not without a repetition of disorder in the galleries, read the documents on the King's health. Then Grattan rose.

‘The House had been informed by the Administration,’ he said, ‘that the Prince of Wales was to be Regent, with limitations.’ ‘Limitation was an attack on the King of Ireland,’ and he would have none of it. ‘Ireland was of opinion that the Prince should be invested with the plenitude of Royal power;’ ‘he must therefore take the business out of the hands of the Castle.’ He proposed that the Irish Parliament should vote an immediate address to the Prince, inviting him to an unrestricted Regency.

It was but too plain that Grattan had the sense of the House with him. After two years of comparative sanity, the madness which had rejected the commercial propositions had returned. The Irish gentry were again inflamed with national vanity, and a fresh convulsion was at hand. Close in front, too, lay to appearance a change of ministry; an enthusiastic Lord-Lieutenant ready to make himself Grattan’s tool; and the control of the State in the hands of a party who believed that the spirit which ravished Protestant girls, nailed the ears and cheeks of clergy to gateposts, houghed soldiers, and carded tithe-proctors, was to be cured by additional liberty. Having opposed the Police Act in vain in all its stages, Grattan’s now most ardent hope was to repeal it, to arm the rabble with votes, and lay the country at their mercy, without a force to maintain the elements of order. And out of these constituents he dreamt that he could create a nation.

The experiment, it was but too likely, would

immediately be tried, and the precipitate anxiety to anticipate England's action on the Regency was the first move in the game. Already Dublin was on fire. The debate was interrupted at its commencement by a riot at the door of the House. The mob had assaulted the door-keepers in trying to force an entrance. A constable had been almost killed. As soon as business was resumed, Tom Conolly, Charles Sheridan, and Lord Henry Fitzgerald spoke, amidst general applause, in favour of Grattan's motion. Alone—for no one but he dared encounter the lunacy of his countrymen in its first paroxysm—Fitzgibbon came forward to oppose it. To him the enthusiasm of Irish nationality was a combination of knavery and folly. To assume the privileges of equality with England, to fly in England's face, and become a thorn in her side, could end only, as he well knew, in the not distant annihilation of the phantom Constitution. Never, while they could help it, would any English Ministry, Whig or Tory, allow Ireland to be really free. Then, as always, Fitzgibbon determined to make these oratorical senators, and the mob at their backs, understand their real position. Even by the letter of the Constitution itself they were not justified in what they were preparing to do.

He first desired the Clerk of the House to read the 4th of William and Mary, which 'declares the kingdom of Ireland to be annexed to the Imperial Crown of England,' and 'the sovereign of England, therefore, to be by undoubted right sovereign of Ireland also.' He then proceeded :

‘ I am perfectly convinced that what I shall say will have no effect on gentlemen on the other side of the House. Let them propose what address they please, it will certainly be voted; and therefore I would not have risen to trouble the committee at all, if I was not convinced that the measures proposed are contrary to the laws of the realm, and criminal in the extreme. The Crown of Ireland and the Crown of England are inseparably united, and the Irish Parliament is totally independent of the British Parliament. The first of these positions is your security, the second your freedom; and any other language tends to the separation of the crowns or the subjection of your Parliament. The only security of your liberty is the connexion with Great Britain; and gentlemen who risk breaking the connexion must make up their minds to a union. God forbid I should ever see that day; but if the day comes on which a separation shall be attempted, I shall not hesitate to embrace a union rather than a separation.

‘ Under the Duke of Portland’s Government the grievances of Ireland were stated to be the usurpation of the British Parliament, a perpetual Mutiny Bill, and the powers assumed by the Privy Council. They were redressed. In redressing them you passed a law by which you enact that all Bills which pass the two Houses here, which shall be certified into England, and which shall be *returned under the Great Seal of England*, without any addition, diminution, or alteration whatever, shall pass into law, and no other. By



this you make the Great Seal of England essentially and indispensably necessary to the passing of laws in Ireland. You can pass no Act without certifying it into England, and having it returned with the Great Seal of that kingdom; insomuch that were the King of England and Ireland to come here in person and to reside, he could not pass a Bill without it being first certified to his Regent in England, who must return it under the Great Seal of that kingdom before his majesty could even in person assent to it.

‘Let me suppose that we, in the dignity of our independence, appoint a Regent for Ireland, being a different person from the Regent of England—a case not utterly impossible, if you insist on our appointing the Prince of Wales before it is known whether he will accept the Regency of England; and suppose we should go further, and desire him to give the Royal assent to our Bills, he would say, “My good people of Ireland, you have by your law made the Great Seal of England essentially necessary to be affixed to each Bill before it passes in Ireland. That Seal is in the hands of the Chancellor of England, who is a very sturdy fellow. That Chancellor is an officer under the Regent of England. I have no authority over him, and so, my very good people of Ireland, you had better apply to the Regent of England, and request that he will order the Chancellor to affix the Great Seal of England to your Bills, otherwise, my very good people of Ireland, I cannot pass them.” Suppose you choose a Regent by address in the manner you suggest, and

by fatality a different Regent be appointed for Great Britain, and your Regent chooses to come over here and exercise his authority in person, the moment a Regent is appointed in Great Britain he may send a commission under the Great Seal appointing a Lord-Lieutenant, and to that commission your Regent is bound to pay obedience. If he refuses, he stakes his head on the experiment.

‘ There is a feature in this proceeding which, independent of other objections to it, does in my mind make it so highly reprehensible, that I consider it a formal appeal from the Parliament of England to that of Ireland. We shall sow the seeds of dissension between the Parliaments of the two countries; and though I do not desire the Parliament of this country implicitly to follow the Parliament of England, I should consider it a wise maxim for this country always to concur with that Parliament, unless for very strong reasons indeed we are obliged to differ from it. If it is to be a point of Irish dignity to differ from the Parliament of England to show our independence, I very much fear the sober men in this country who have estates to lose will soon become sick of independence.<sup>1</sup> Constituted as it is, the Government of the country

<sup>1</sup> Let the reader observe the turn given to these most sensible words by Mr. Henry Grattan, in the Life of his father. ‘ Mr. Pitt was determined that the working of the free Constitution should be stopped; that the era of 1782 should exist

merely in name; and, in the wicked words of his minister, Fitzgibbon, *to make the Irish gentry sick of their independence.*’ (The italics are Mr. Grattan’s.) — *Grattan’s Life*, vol. iii. p. 415.

can never go on unless we follow Great Britain implicitly in all regulations of Imperial policy, and you who profess yourselves this night advocates for the independence of the Irish Crown are advocates for its separation from England. Let us agree with England in these three points—one king, one law, one religion. Let us keep these objects steadily in view, and we act like wise men. If you make the Prince of Wales your Regent, and grant him plenitude of power, let it be done by Bill;<sup>1</sup> otherwise I see such dangers that I deprecate the measure proposed. I call on the country gentlemen of Ireland. This is not a time to think of every paltry disappointment sustained at the Castle of Dublin. If any man has been aggrieved by the Viceroy, and chooses to compose a philippic on the occasion, let him give it on the debates of a Turnpike Bill, when it will not be disgraceful to the man who utters it, as on the present occasion.’<sup>2</sup>

Not Shylock, when he heard Portia interpret the law of Venice, was more astounded than Grattan, when he learnt the value to Ireland of the Constitution of '82. Was the child of his enthusiasm, for which his country had magnificently rewarded him, for which the orators of Parliament had raised him higher than Lord Chatham, was it after all a miserable farce? Was Ireland not independent, then? No; nor ever could be. There is no political independence save that which is won by the sword, and if the dread appeal is

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<sup>1</sup> Because the Bill before it become law must pass under the Great Seal of England.

<sup>2</sup> *Irish Debates*, February 11, 1789.

insisted on can be maintained by the sword. Independence, save to those who can fight for it, is an illusion and a curse.

The debate which followed the delivery of this extraordinary speech was more like the screaming of macaws than the grave consultation of reasonable beings. If such was the meaning of the Act of '82, Grattan wildly answered, why had not the Attorney-General warned them of it? Not for this would the patriot Commons part with their inalienable rights. The Government attempted no division. The next day the address was carried by acclamation and sent to the Lords; while, as a fit adjunct to the scene within, the undergraduates of Trinity, armed with swords and pistols, were fighting the police at the doors.

The Peers were scarcely less insane than the Lower House. The Duke of Leinster and Lord Charlemont, the Archbishop of Cashel and Lord Perry, were agreed 'on the duty of availing themselves of the opportunity of asserting the total independence of Ireland.'<sup>1</sup> They carried with them a large February majority, and out of seventy-one Peers forty-<sup>17</sup> five voted for the address, and returned it approved to the Commons.

Though the struggle was hopeless for the moment, the Attorney-General repeated his objection. He said that he had consulted the Chancellor and the

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, February 17, 1789.'

Judges. They were unanimously of opinion that he had stated correctly the character of the Constitution, and that anterior to the passing of the Regency Bill in England the address was not only improper, but treasonable. For the honour of the Irish nation, for the honour of the illustrious personage to whom it was to be presented, he besought the House to pause.

He was speaking to the winds. A chorus of shouting voices gave him for an answer that the address should be carried to the Viceroy by the two Houses on the following day, with a request for immediate transmission.

Thus, on the 18th, the Lords and Commons of Ireland marched in state to the Castle, with the Chancellor and Speaker at their head. In the Presence Chamber Lord Lifford read the invitation to the Prince, and presented it to the Viceroy.

The next packet might bring Lord Spenser, and it might be his last official act. Lord Buckingham declined to purchase a recovery of his popularity at the sacrifice of honour.

He drew back, and refused to receive the roll.

‘Under the impression,’ he said, ‘which I feel of my official duty, and of the oath which I have taken as Chief Governor of Ireland, I am obliged to decline transmitting this address into Great Britain. I cannot consider myself warranted to lay before the Prince of Wales an address purporting to invest his Royal Highness with power to take on him the government

of this realm before he shall be enabled by law so to do.' <sup>1</sup>

Bubbling over with indignation, the senators returned to their Houses. The Duke of Leinster in one place, and Grattan in the other, proposed a present adjournment. They must act with dignity, Grattan said, and not allow themselves to appear to be swayed by temper.

The first impression appears to have been that no more could be done till Lord Spenser arrived.<sup>2</sup> But to wait for Spenser would be to wait till the Prince of Wales was English Regent, and therefore to miss the point of the opportunity. Braver counsels prevailed. The House of Commons re-assembled on the 20th, the Viceroy expecting violent resolutions to be passed against himself.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Todd Jones, the hottest and most foolish of the patriot chiefs, announced that 'the life of the country was at stake.' 'The Chief Governor had set

<sup>1</sup> Lord Buckingham's conduct was fully approved in England. 'The Cabinet,' Lord Sydney wrote, 'entirely concur in the propriety of your declining to transmit the address. His Royal Highness cannot lawfully take upon him any part of the King's authority till he is enabled by Act of Parliament to do so; and no Act of the Irish Parliament for that, or any other purpose, can be passed, except by the Royal assent, given under the Great Seal.—Lord Sydney to the Marquis of Buckingham, February 21, 1789.

Secret.' S. P. O.

<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Portland, writing on the 21st of February to Grattan, says: 'I learn, by letters from Ireland, it is the intention of our friends to defer the consideration of all public business till after the departure or removal of the present Lord-Lieutenant.'—*Grattan's Life*, vol. iii. p. 373. The letters referred to probably left Dublin on the evening of the 18th.

<sup>3</sup> 'To Lord Sydney, February 19. Most secret.' S. P. O.

himself at issue with the Legislature, and there was a doubt whether by such desperate conduct he had not virtually abdicated.' 'The situation,' he said, 'was awful.' 'In silent anxiety Ireland confided in her Parliament, and demanded an unimpeached Constitution.'

Mr. Grattan followed. He moved that, the Viceroy having refused to transmit the address to the Prince, a deputation should be chosen from the Lords and Commons to carry it over; and this being assented to, he proposed next a formal resolution that, in addressing his Royal Highness, the Parliament of Ireland had exercised an undoubted right.

On the first motion Fitzgibbon had been passive; on the second he again came forward to confront the tempest. Though he was liable, as he well knew, to be called out by every bellowing patriot, and to be made to answer for his words to twenty champions of liberty at the pistol's mouth, he again cautioned the House 'how it followed the honourable gentleman in his ill-advised and desperate speculation.'

'Let me tell the gentlemen of Ireland,' he said, 'that the only security by which they hold their property, the only security they have for the present Constitution in Church and State, is the connexion of the Irish Crown with, and its dependence upon, the Crown of England. That connexion and that dependence have been sealed with the best blood of this country. If they are not duped into idle and fantastical speculations under the pretence of asserting

national dignity and independence, they will feel the effects to their sorrow. For give me leave to say, sir, that when we speak of the people of Ireland, it is a melancholy truth that we do not speak of the great body of the people. This is a subject on which it is painful to me to be obliged to touch in this assembly; but when I see the right honourable member driving the gentlemen of Ireland to the verge of a precipice, it is time to speak out. . . . Sir, the ancient nobility and gentry of this kingdom have been hardly treated. The Act by which most of us hold our estates was an Act of violence—an Act subverting the first principles of the Common Law in England and Ireland. I speak of the Act of Settlement; and that gentlemen may know the extent to which that summary confiscation has gone, I will tell them that every acre of land which pays quit-rent to the Crown is held by title derived under the Act of Settlement. So I trust gentlemen on the opposite benches will deem it worthy of consideration how far it may be prudent to pursue the successive claims of dignified and unequivocal independence made for Ireland by the right honourable gentleman.

‘So long as we remain satisfied with the Constitution as settled in ’82, so long as we use our opportunities to cement the union of the Crowns and cultivate the affection and confidence of the British nation, we shall cultivate peace, good order, and prosperity in this country.

‘If in a moment of frenzy the two Houses of



Parliament of this country are to sacrifice their connexion with the Crown of England in pursuit of paradoxical phantoms, perhaps we may live to see Ireland once more indebted to a British army for the restoration of her civil and religious liberty. Do you suppose the British nation will submit to the claim now set up by the Irish Parliament? If the address of both Houses can invest the Prince of Wales with Royal power in this country, the same address could convey the same powers to Louis XVI., or to his Holiness the Pope, or to the right honourable mover of this resolution.

‘It is impossible the assertion of this claim will not again commit this country with Great Britain, and if by fatality we are committed, what must be the event? We are committing ourselves against the law and against the Constitution, and in such a contest Ireland must fall.’<sup>1</sup>

Fitzgibbon’s words might be remembered afterwards. In the present humour of men they fell like rain-drops in water, and swelled the volume of insanity. Ireland bravely asserted by vote ‘her undoubted rights.’ Grattan moved and carried another resolution,<sup>2</sup> that Lord Buckingham’s refusal to submit his address was ill-advised and unconstitutional. The Duke of Leinster, Lord Charlemont, Tom Conolly, Mr. O’Neil, and William Ponsonby, were selected as a deputation to wait personally on the Prince, and they would have

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, February 20, 1789.

<sup>2</sup> By 119 votes to 78.

sailed on the evening of the 21st but for a severe easterly gale.<sup>1</sup>

The same wind which detained them in harbour brought over news which chilled the patriotic heart. The King was rapidly recovering. The Duke of Portland reported that the Opposition had been unable to prevent an adjournment of the Regency Bill. The Prince of Wales could not command the Great Seal till it was passed, and Lord Spenser's departure for Ireland was therefore indefinitely postponed.

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<sup>1</sup> So childish was the stilted stage play, that the deputation were going, uncertain whether to present the address or not, if they found the English Regency still undetermined on their arrival. The opinion of the lawyers that they were committing treason had frightened them; and Grattan, when they pressed for positive directions, had declined to decide.—The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, February 21. Secret.

## SECTION VI.

PATRIOTIC effervescences are often irrational. They  
 February, are only occasionally vile. The sequel of the  
 1789 explosion on the Regency forms a characteris-  
 tic episode in Irish Parliamentary history. The Duke  
 of Leinster, Lord Shannon, Charles Sheridan, William  
 Ponsonby, and many other members of both Houses  
 who had been enthusiastic promoters of the address,  
 held at the same time lucrative offices under the Crown.  
 The contingency of the King's recovery had not oc-  
 curred to them. They had gone on fearlessly in the  
 confident hope of Lord Spenser's coming, when they  
 might rather look for fresh promotion than risk the  
 loss of what they held already. If the Prince's father  
 became again capable of discharging his functions, the  
 Marquis of Buckingham would remain at the Castle,  
 and they saw with horror impending over them imme-  
 diate retribution for the part which they had played.  
 The complete recovery was still only a possibility, but  
 it was necessary to be prepared for either alternative.  
 Twenty peers and thirty-seven commoners were the  
 number compromised—members of one House or the  
 other who had pledged their service to the Crown for  
 valuable consideration, and were in danger for breach  
 of contract. They were aware that they could not  
 trust one another, and that each if left to himself might  
 seek to make his peace at the expense of his compan-

ions. With the Duke of Leinster and Lord Charlemont at their head, they set their names to a round-robin, in which they bound themselves as a body to make Government impossible should the Viceroy venture to punish either of them for his late vote by loss of office or pension.

Their fears having been thus secured, the deputation sailed for Holyhead, while Grattan determined, if possible, to force Lord Buckingham to resign, and on the 25th of February moved a limitation of the supplies to two months.

Mr. Brownlow, in seconding this motion, reminded the House that if the supplies were granted for the usual time, the Viceroy might imitate Lord Townshend and prorogue. The situation had so closely reproduced itself, that if the King's recovery became a fact, an attempt at a similar solution might be expected with certainty.

Fitzgibbon, alluding scornfully to the round-robin, and anticipating the consequences, said he was sorry to hear the spirit of Whiteboyism had penetrated Parliament. He had been informed of a combination among distinguished lords and gentlemen which, if it had been proved against a tithe-proctor, would have made the combining parties liable to be whipped at the cart's tail. As to what Mr. Brownlow had said of Lord Townshend and the prorogation, 'he remembered it well. He remembered the same Parliament afterwards voting Lord Townshend an address of thanks, and the majority which passed it had cost the nation

half a million of money.' 'Mr. Grattan's motion,' he added, with cool contempt, 'might, if carried, lead to a similar address, which would cost half a million more, and he should therefore oppose it.'

Grattan's motion *was* carried, and Fitzgibbon's prophecy proved nearly true. The farce was almost over. The same 25th of February the Duke of Leinster and his companions reached London and presented their address. The Prince thanked Ireland warmly, but was obliged, he said, 'to delay his final answer in consequence of the fortunate change which had taken place.' On the first of March official information reached Dublin that the King's health was restored, and the necessity for a Regency at an end.

If Lord Buckingham was to continue Viceroy, it was impossible for him to pass over the round-robin. 'The object of it,' he said himself, 'was to compel him to quit the kingdom.' 'The aristocracy, who had been broken once under his Majesty's direction,' had again combined against English authority, and 'must be broken a second time,' but they could be broken only 'by measures of the utmost decision and severity.'<sup>1</sup> Grattan, too, knew that he had gone too far to retire. He knew that his majority would melt from him if the source of patronage was to remain unchanged. While the Viceroy was meditating when and how to strike, Grattan endeavoured to drag the House of Commons with him, while its ranks were still unbroken, into a series of hostile resolutions,

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord Sydney, March 1, 1789.' S. P. O.

one aimed specially at Buckingham himself, condemning the grant of high offices of State to absentees; another, striking at the Pension List; a third, binding the House to repeal Fitzgibbon's Police Bill, which he hated with the instinct of a revolutionist. He had been prompt; for final news from England arrived only in the last days of February, and the resolutions were introduced on the 3rd of March. But he was still too late. His most trusted followers were <sup>March</sup> already meditating retreat. An article had appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, written by a Mr. Higgins, reflecting on the '82 Constitution, and insisting that for so imperfect a piece of legislation, as it now proved to be, the great liberator had been too precipitately rewarded. Mr. Parsons remarked in the House, in the same cynical strain, on Grattan's 'bungling.' The House listened with toleration, if not with favour; Grattan could not bear it, and forgot himself. The honourable gentleman, he said, was not original. He was repeating a charge which had been expressed better elsewhere, but whether said better or said worse, it was false. Mr. Higgins was a liar. The *Freeman's Journal* was a liar. The authority from which Mr. Parsons drew his argument was a liar, a pitiful public liar. He did not mean that the right honourable gentleman was a liar, but the paper from which he took his accusation was a liar, a pitiful public liar.

Parsons stepped across the floor and said a few words to Grattan, 'not recorded for the honour of

Parliament.' Shouts rose on all sides of 'Custody!' The galleries were cleared, and for two hours the House was frantic.<sup>1</sup>

When order was restored, Mr. Corry, on behalf of the Government, moved an adjournment; and a division of 115 to 106 in favour of the Castle informed the world that the crisis was over, and that the apostate members had returned to their duties.

Both sides had exerted themselves to the utmost. Grattan, whose resolutions had been originally more violent, had modified them to conciliate support. 'We were convinced,' said the Viceroy, on the other hand, 'that it was essential to the peace of Ireland and to the existence of the Government that the attempt should be defeated.'<sup>2</sup> Lord Townshend's precedent had been copied as Fitzgibbon foretold, and the usual influences had been employed with the usual success.

To the declaration against an increase of the Pension List, Lord Buckingham was not in principle opposed. Mr. Forbes had introduced an annual Bill on this subject. The Government had this year been neutral, the Viceroy was anxious to end a vexatious subject, and the Bill had been read a third time. It was a compromise, restricting the Civil Pensions to 80,000*l.*; and by limiting the abuse, was understood to recognize them within the limit defined. It established the principle that no one holding a pension from the

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<sup>1</sup> PLOWDEN, vol. iii. p. 236-7.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, March 4, 1789.'  
S. P. O.

Crown could sit in the House of Commons; and the Viceroy, who really hated the detestable process by which the Government majority had been maintained, had congratulated himself on the prospect of being rid of it,<sup>1</sup> and rejoiced in the acquisition of a means of clearing the House of unprincipled and troublesome members.

The promotion of a measure, however, so desirable in itself, had to yield at the present moment to the need of punishing the subscribers of the round-robin. The Leinster-Ponsonby clique could not be allowed to defy the Crown; and when this delicate matter came to be discussed in Council, it was discovered that 'so violent and dangerous a combination could only be destroyed by a considerable increase in the Pension List.' 'It was unwise to close the door at a time when every exertion had to be made.'<sup>2</sup> To this view of the matter the Cabinet agreed. Mr. Forbes's measure was

<sup>1</sup> 'The Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Sydney, March 20. Secret.' Lord Buckingham's words indicate that Government had all along been in favour of this provision, and that the difficulty had not been at the Castle, but in the Parliament, which was in love with its own corruption:

'Another principle,' he said, 'is established in this Bill, entirely novel in the Statute Book, though often attempted by different Governments, I mean the principle of vacating, by pensions or otherwise, the seats of members of the House of Commons. I need not explain to your lordship the manifest advantages of such a power to be lodged

in the Crown. His majesty's service has often suffered materially from the want of it, and the Opposition has always been particularly jealous on this subject, and I am inclined to believe they would not have passed this clause had they clearly seen the operation of it. I am not blind to the danger of suffering so material an innovation in the system by which the Government of this kingdom has been so long administered, nor would I have consented to the second reading, if I had not conceived the Government would be essentially strengthened by it.'

<sup>2</sup> 'To Lord Sydney, March 20. Most secret.'



thrown out by order in its last stage in the House of Lords, and the means of corruption thus reserved were freely lavished, preparatory to inflicting the intended chastisement.

Seeing how things were going, the guilty fifty-seven were now anxious to make terms. They first made advances in a body. Lord Buckingham 'refused to treat with them collectively,' though professing himself 'willing to consider the representations of individuals for themselves, if they would disclaim the written association.' Too well they knew his meaning; too well they foresaw the sure effect of such invitation; well aware that each, if he could, would scramble on the other's back to save himself from drowning. The noble lords and gentlemen who were lately so valiant thought only how each could save his own miserable skin. Those who felt most secure of being able to make terms clamoured that the round-robin should be burnt; those of 'less influence' clung desperately to it as to a raft on the waves. To Fitzgibbon, who had denounced them as Whiteboys who ought to be whipped, the penitent suppliants came now suing for forgiveness. They told him that the association was dissolved. They promised, that if he insisted on it, the bond should be destroyed in his presence.<sup>1</sup> Lord Shannon, Lord Clifden, Lord Loftus, Hely Hutchinson, 'and many other members of both Houses,' begged him to assure the Viceroy 'that they did not wish to oppose

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<sup>1</sup> Apparently, Fitzgibbon preferred that the round-robin should survive among the curiosities of the Irish Parliament. A fac-simile of it will be found in 'Sir Jonah Barrington's Historical Memoirs.'

his majesty's Government.' 'They laid themselves at his majesty's feet with every expression of duty, and of their humble hopes, by their future support, to remove every unfavourable impression from his majesty's mind.'

The humiliation was held to be penalty sufficient.

'Under these circumstances,' Lord Buckingham wrote on the 23rd of March, 'I have not hesitated in authorizing the Attorney-General to declare that it was not my intention to recommend to his majesty the dismissal of any of those gentlemen with whom he had conversed, or that might accede immediately to the same declaration of submission. It is, however, expressly declared that the King's Government is under no engagements for future favour or countenance, either in their counties or elections, to any of those noblemen and gentlemen; and it is equally stipulated that any engagements to those who have zealously and uniformly supported Government shall be maintained, though the arrangements may interfere with the former engagements which had been made to those members when supporting the Administration.'<sup>1</sup>

The great peers and commoners who were so ready to sacrifice honour and principle to save their pensions and sinecures were most of them the owners of estates large enough to have enabled them to afford the luxury of a political conscience. Familiarity with corruption had blunted the perception of its shamefulness. There were still found, however, a few leaders who, at the last moment, refused to bend. The Duke of Leinster,

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Lord Sydney, March 23.' S. P. O.

the two Ponsonbies, and others who were connected with Fox and Portland, stood out alike against the entreaties of their companions and the menaces of the Castle. A lingering remnant of honour so far influenced the rest of the subscribers that they affected to hesitate to make separate terms. They insisted that Buckingham must grant 'a general amnesty,' but they allowed him to attach as a condition that the bond must be regarded as dissolved, and that the parties to it must promise, collectively and severally, to abstain from factious opposition to Lord Buckingham during the rest of his viceroyalty. The Viceroy's consent satisfied the consciences of the majority. Shannon,<sup>1</sup> Loftus, and Clifden authorized Fitzgibbon to say that the association was now really at an end, and if Lord Buckingham would have accepted a general declaration, the irreconcilables would have probably been contented to leave him undisturbed.

The victory had been too expensive, however, to be left half won. Lord Buckingham properly insisted on receiving the promise from each of the subscribers who held office. The Duke of Leinster was Master of the Rolls. George Ponsonby had a high place on the Board of Revenue. William Ponsonby was Postmaster-General. With the Duke and William Ponsonby, who had gone on the deputation to England, it was especially necessary to be firm.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Henry Grattan places Lord Shannon in the list of those who stood out and lost their offices. I know not what was Mr. Grattan's authority. The Viceroy's letters speak of him throughout as the most eager of the whole party to be restored to favour.

The engagement which they were asked to give was but trifling, and their decision was not arrived at without effort. The Duke considered for three days before he gave his conclusive refusal. William Ponsonby pretended illness, but at last wrote an answer to the Secretary, which was equally explicit.<sup>1</sup>

Ponsonby was made the protomartyr, as Burke was not ashamed to call him. Never did victim of intrigue and vanity suffer in a cause more contemptible.<sup>2</sup> The Viceroy, sorry, as he described himself, to dismiss a man from his majesty's service who stated his objections to be personal against himself, ordered Ponsonby's immediate removal. His friends attempted to make it 'a casus fœderis, on which the subscribers were bound to re-unite.' Some positively refused; others were 'cautiously indisposed.' The Viceroy saw that he might proceed safely, and the Treasurer of the Post-office, Mr. Lodge Morris, was taken next in hand. He, too, replied in writing, and with deliberate insolence.<sup>3</sup> The Viceroy enclosed it to Lord Sydney, and

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir,—I intend to support the usual supplies, and his majesty's Government in this country; but I will not enter into any engagement whatever with my Lord Buckingham. And as some misconceptions have arisen in consequence of verbal communications with his Excellency, I take the liberty of giving this answer in writing.

'W. B. PONSONBY.'

<sup>2</sup> 'I am charmed with what I hear of the Duke of Leinster. Ponsonby, it seems, is the protomartyr. I am not mistaken in the

opinion I formed of him—a manly, decided character, with a clear, vigorous understanding.' — Burke to Lord Charlemont, March 29, 1789.

<sup>3</sup> Lodge Morris had private wrongs to complain of. The Duke of Rutland had promised him a seat in the Privy Council, and Buckingham had left the promise unfulfilled.

'Lord Buckingham,' he said in his letter, 'has acted contemptuously and unjustifiably towards Parliament. He has broken the

the Cabinet answered with a dismissal. Finally, the Duke of Leinster was deprived of the Mastership of the Rolls, an office of which his possession was an absurdity, and retired to Carton to digest his disgust, and encourage his brother in treason.

So ended a business disgraceful to all concerned in it—disgraceful to the English Whigs, who had allowed themselves for their own purposes to trifle with the insanity of Ireland—disgraceful to the spurious enthusiasts for independence, who had taken the pay of Government and turned against it, expecting a new Viceroy and a change of wind, and when they found themselves mistaken, broke the faith which they had sworn to one another<sup>1</sup>—most disgraceful of all to the Government, which stooped again to gain its ends by dabbling in the filthy waters of Parliamentary corruption. Lord Buckingham might congratulate himself on ‘having been able to withdraw the favour of Government from unprincipled politicians who, in critical movements, proved always false to their engagements.’<sup>2</sup> But the band of malcontents was broken by bribery, by the gross and flagrant purchase of the so-called independent members, and by promotion equally scandalous of persons whose fitter reward

faith of the King's Government solemnly pledged for services performed, and has thereby disgraced the memory of the Duke of Rutland, our late beloved Chief Governor. With these impressions on my mind, it cannot be expected that the Marquis should be the object of great personal respect from me.’

—*MSS. Ireland*, April 12, 1789. S. P. O.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to find among the subscribers of the round-robin the unsuccessful Lord Rawdon, of the American war, now Earl of Moira.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Buckingham to Lord Sydney, March 30. Most secret.

would have been the horsewhip. 13,000*l.* a year was bestowed in the form of pensions. New offices were created of which the salaries were large and the duties small or none.<sup>1</sup> Nine lords gained a step in the peerage, Loftus earning an earldom by his timely desertion of the subscribers; and seven commoners were translated into the lower stages of those celestial regions to rise in turn by new services into the higher spheres. Some ascended by first descending; some by genuine merit and proved fidelity. In this strange scandal began the noble house of Londonderry. Lord Lifford having resigned the Great Seal, Fitzgibbon, the one person who had borne himself throughout with scornful integrity, became on the same occasion Lord Chancellor.

Mr. Grattan and his friends, after so signal a defeat, found their cause hopeless so long as the House of Commons was unreformed, and they established a separate Assembly, through which they could make known their opinions. Borne on the rising tide of modern democracy, spirited into hope and daring by the storming of the Bastille, they formed themselves into the celebrated Whig Club, where the dinners were accompanied with speeches which became the ornament of the patriot newspapers. Their objects were to resist English encroachments, to reform the Constitution, and maintain the rights of the people. The aristocratic chiefs of the party held out their hands to the members of the secret societies, who, in meaner circles, had kept

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<sup>1</sup> A hundred and ten 'servants of the Crown' were now in the House of Commons — disciplined into obedience by the punishment of the mutineers.

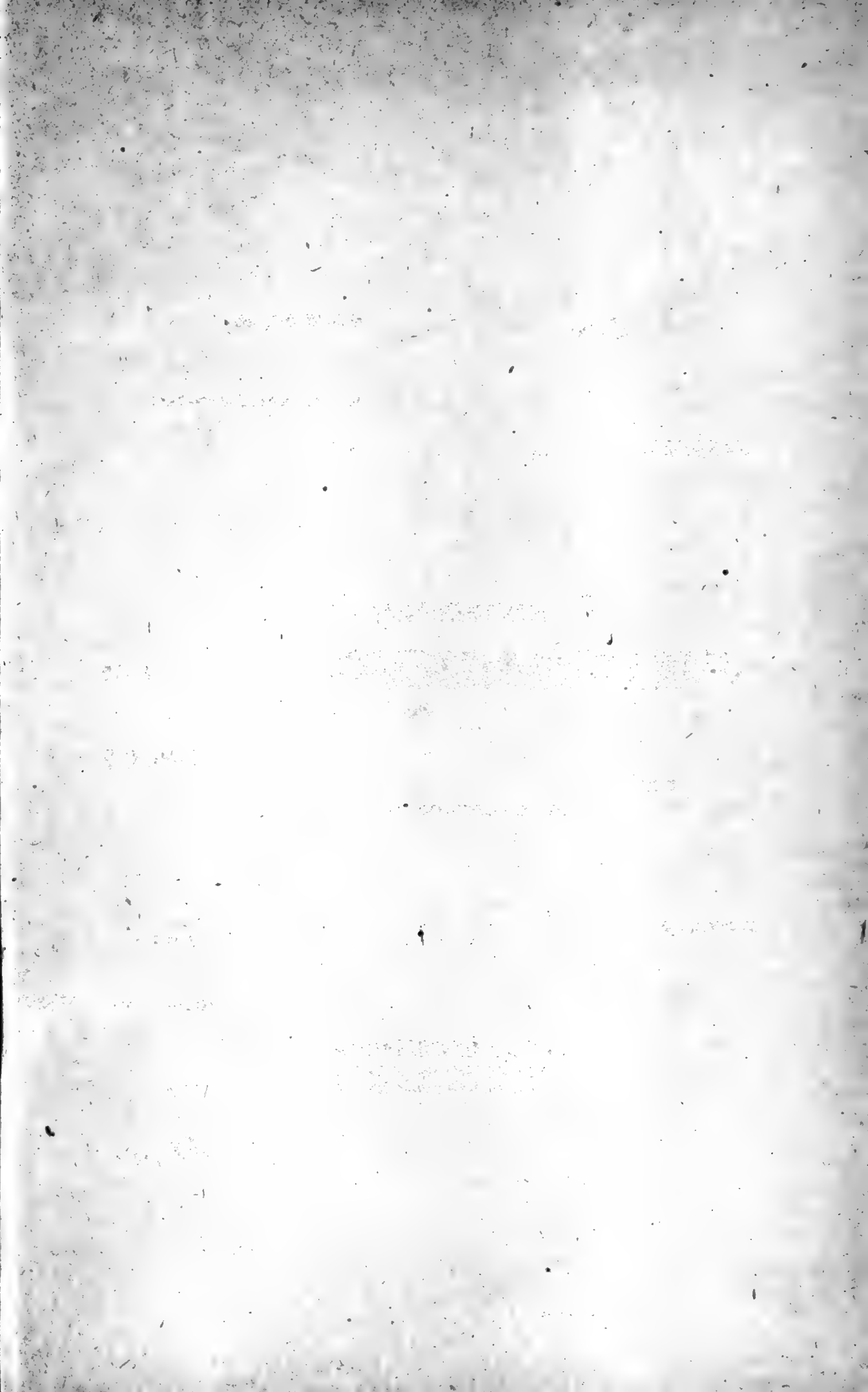
alive the sacred flame; and the Club was composed of men part of whom were hanged or exiled for high treason; the other part became Privy Councillors, Judges, or Cabinet Ministers.

‘Under this banner,’ said Fitzgibbon afterwards, ‘was ranged such a motley collection of congenial characters as never before were assembled for the reformation of a State. Mr. Napper Tandy was received by acclamation as a statesman too important and illustrious to be committed to the hazard of a ballot. Mr. Hamilton Rowan repaired to the same flag. In the fury of political resentment noblemen and gentlemen of the first rank in this country stooped to associate with the refuse of the community, whose principles they abhorred, and whose manners must have excited their disgust.’<sup>1</sup>

Lord Buckingham, brought into haven at last, declined further experience of Irish government, and went home. Dublin proposed to illuminate on his departure. The mob designed him a rougher farewell. He disappointed the kind intentions of both city and populace by embarking quietly and unexpectedly at Blackrock. The reins were passed to the Earl of Westmoreland, who landed on the 5th of January, Major Hobart, afterwards Earl of Buckingham, being Secretary.

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Clare’s speech on the Union.









*Alfred Mitchell*



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**THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND.**

**VOLUME III.**





# THE ENGLISH IN IRELAND

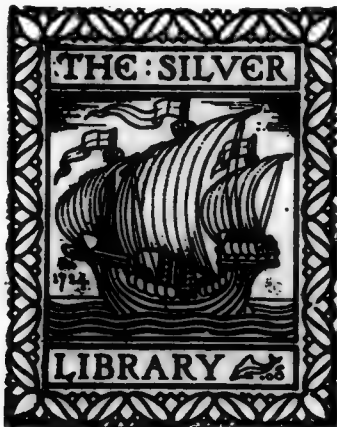
IN THE

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A.

LATE REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



*IN THREE VOLUMES*

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## BOOK VIII.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE UNITED IRISHMEN.

##### SECTION I.

**T**HE Dungannon Volunteers had asserted that freedom was the indefeasible birthright of man, and they defined freedom to consist in the consent of the governed to the laws which they were required to obey. They might as well have said that their consent was required to the law which would break their necks if they fell over a precipice. The conditions under which human society will cohere harmoniously are inherent in the nature of things; and human laws are wise or unwise, just or unjust, so far as they are formed on accurate discernment of the laws which nature has imposed. To live well is the most difficult of arts. The rules to which individuals must conform, if the State is to prosper, can be discerned only by men of practical intellect and nobleness of character; and in growing and vigorous nations the functions of government are, therefore, entrusted not to those persons only who have given proof of energy and ability,

but to those who by birth and station are raised above the temptations of self-interest.

Strength brings security, and security negligence. Civilization and prosperity introduce luxurious habits and extravagant expenditure. The high persons and privileged classes to whom the care of the Commonwealth has been committed forget their duties in their pleasures. They believe that the State exists only for themselves. They pass unequal laws, and the people are oppressed, and clamour naturally to share the powers which can be no longer trusted in the old hands.

Hence come reforms and revolutions, the shaking off of rulers who have become incompetent and mischievous. The change is called progress, and is admired and applauded as some grand political achievement, a thing excellent in itself, an entrance into a new era of universal happiness. Many times in the world's history these glorious hopes have been entertained, but always to be disappointed. Only at critical moments, when some patent wrong has to be redressed, will the better kind of men leave their proper occupations to meddle with politics. The peasant and the artisan, the man of business and the man of science, all of all sorts who are good in their kind, give themselves to their own work, caring only to do well what nature has assigned to them to do. The volunteer politicians in every class, those who put themselves forward in elections to choose or to be chosen, are usually the vain, the restless, the personally ambitious;

and therefore the same causes which undermine aristocracies destroy even more rapidly popular Governments. Democracies are proverbially short-lived. They can destroy class privileges, they can overthrow institutions, but their function ends in destruction; and when the generations pass away which, under a sterner system, had learnt habits of self-command, and could therefore for a time dispense with control, they pass away to give place usually to despotism. Private character degenerates. Individuals forget their country to care only for themselves, and therefore dwindle to a lower level. The men of the first French Revolution and the American Revolution were greater than any which either country has produced in the days of universal suffrage, equality, and miscalled liberty.

The aristocracy in these islands lost the confidence of the people in the last century. Their power and privileges have melted from them and are still melting, and we have again committed ourselves to the enthusiastic beliefs of which the Dungannon resolutions were no more than a crude expression. We have a new philosophy to gild a phenomenon which would look less pretty were its character confessed. Once more we have made an idol of spurious freedom, and we are worshipping it duly with unflinching devotion and the inexorable logic of faith. Universal happiness waits to appear where the rights of man shall have been completely recognised. Battle after battle is fought and won. Paradise is still unattained, but we do not



doubt the truth of our theory ; we conclude only that the process of destruction is incomplete. The enemy still lets, and will let, till he be taken out of the way. When all men shall be free to think, free to speak, free to act at their own sweet wills, and prejudice and tyranny cease to interfere with them, then at length the universal brotherhood will be a fact, and misery will cease out of the land. All men are by nature equal and free. All men being free have a right to share in the making of the laws. Being alike interested in the results, we assume that they will choose the best representatives to make them, and will become themselves elevated and ennobled in the exercise of their lofty prerogative. The propositions are as false as the anticipation is delusive. Men are not equal, but infinitely unequal. No man is free by nature, and becomes free only by the discipline of submission, by learning to command himself, or by submitting to be commanded by others. The multitude, who are slaves of their own ignorance, will choose those to represent them who flatter their vanity or pander to their interest. Emancipation from authority cannot elevate, but can only degrade, those who are not emancipated by nature and fact.

False though it be, however, in its principles, the philosophy of progress pushes its way towards its goal with unflinching confidence and logical coherence. That which is unsound must fall before it ; that which is untrue must be seen to be false ; that which is unjust must perish. Then at length the wheel will have come

full round, and finding ourselves not in Paradise at all, but sitting in arid desolation amidst the wrecks of our institutions, we shall painfully wake from our dream and begin again the long toil of reconstruction.

The history of Ireland in the concluding years of the last century forms a remarkable episode in this yet uncompleted drama. The degeneracy of authority which precipitates civil convulsions had developed itself in Ireland more rapidly than in the rest of the empire. The executive Government was unequal to the elementary work of maintaining peace and order. The aristocracy and legislature were corrupt beyond reach of shame. The gentry had neglected their duties till they had forgotten that they had duties to perform. The peasantry were hopelessly miserable; and finding in the law not a protector and a friend, but a sword in the hands of their oppressors, they had been taught to look to crime and rebellion as the only means of self-defence. Never anywhere were institutions more ripe for destruction than those which England had planted in the unfortunate island which to their common misfortune nature had made part of her dominions. For ten years the Irish people had been fed, chameleon-like, with promises of immediate redemption. The Parliament had achieved its independence. Volunteer battalions had celebrated the triumph with the music of musketry and cannon. Platform and newspaper and flying placard had echoed and repeated the florid rhetoric of Grattan and his friends; yet Liberty had not prevented rents from

rising, landlords from multiplying whisky stills, or whisky stills and middlemen and tithe proctors from driving the people into lower depths of misery and madness. The most enthusiastic patriots were inclining to lie down and despair, when before the astonished eyes of Ireland, as of all Europe, rose the portent of the French Revolution, preaching on scaffold and at cannon's mouth the long waited for emancipation of mankind. Young Ireland, fed from boyhood on Grattan's declamation, passionately believing in freedom, and, mad with disappointment at the failure of the Constitution of '82, responded with ecstasy. The cause of Ireland's, as of all other misery, was the tyranny of classes who, by chicanery and fear, had made the masses of mankind their slaves. France was pointing the way for all who had hearts to follow. Grattan had obtained the independence of Parliament; the independence was a shadow without political equality. Let Irishmen recover their personal rights, and independence would become a fact, and the long-waiting era of blessedness would at last arrive. The soil was unequally prepared. The Catholic religion assimilates ill with visions of political liberty, and except occasionally and for immediate objects disclaims connection with theories to which it is naturally an enemy. The special grievances of which Irish Catholics complained might incline them, however, to make common cause with those whose aim was universal emancipation. Meanwhile the northern Presbyterians were hereditary republicans. Smarting

with the additional wrongs which had been inflicted on them in Ireland, they had sympathised ardently with the revolt of the American colonies, and in the American success they had seen an earnest of the ultimate success of their principles. They had furnished the strength of the Volunteer movement, they had been clamorous for Parliamentary reform, and, though baffled so far, had lost no atom of their faith or their enthusiasm. No less strong were the liberal emotions of the rising generation of educated Irish gentlemen. Trinity College was a hotbed of liberal sentiment. Every clever Irish lad was a born orator, and the orator everywhere is the natural champion of wild imaginations. Among the lawyers, the younger men of business, the aspiring tradesmen, the men of letters, the poets, the artists, the feeling was the same. Grattan was the universal idol, while in the lower stratifications, among the houghers and the tarring and feathering committee, the city mob was in perfect enmity against the authors of the tyrannous Police Bill.

In union alone was there to be found strength. The Protestant reformers who were in earnest felt that they were nothing without the Catholics. Paris had abolished distinctions of creed. Ireland's first cry was to recall three million fellow-citizens to the national standard. Catholic and Protestant were to shake hands over the buried memories of ancient quarrels, and combine in a glorious struggle against the common foe.

## SECTION II.

THE character of the new movement may be conveniently studied in the person of its most celebrated representative. Theobald Wolfe Tone was born <sup>1790</sup> on the 20th of June, 1763. His grandfather was a farmer at Naas; his father a coachmaker in Dublin. Theobald was the eldest son. He was educated at a good school, where he showed talents, but was incurably idle. His fancy was for the army, but his father, ambitious for him of a higher career, sent him instead to Trinity College, where, though the idleness was uncured, he maintained his reputation for ability. When he was nineteen he was second in a duel between two fellow-students, where his friend killed his antagonist. Such a misfortune was too common to attract notice. Tone finished his college career as if nothing had happened, and immediately after he fell in love. His fair one returned his affection. As neither of them possessed a sixpence, they feared their parents might interpose delays, so they shortened the road to happiness by an elopement. This, too, was in keeping with the general recklessness of the time. The young couple were forgiven, but Theobald, leaving his airy ways, was condemned to a profession. The wife remained in Dublin. The husband was sent to London, according to Irish custom, to study law for two years at the Temple. The responsibilities of matrimony failed

to steady so mercurial a temperament. Young Tone hated law as he hated all regular studies. He never opened his Blackstone. He eked out his resources by writing articles for newspapers. He meditated emigration to the South Sea Islands, and addressed a memorial to Pitt on the propriety of founding a military college there. His communication being left unnoticed, he vowed that he would make Pitt smart for neglecting him. He returned to Dublin to be called to the bar in 1789, 'knowing,' he says, 'as much of law as he knew of necromancy.' He went circuit and paid his expenses; but preferring to conquer fame and fortune by a less tedious process, he turned to politics, composed a patriotic pamphlet on the Round Robin, and attracted the favourable notice of the Opposition leaders. George Ponsonby smiled upon him. The Northern Whig Club, the brother society of the club in Dublin, established by Lord Moira and Lord Charlemont, elected him a member.

Tone, however, had already outgrown the Whig philosophy. He had found a friend in the gallery or the House of Commons of more congenial temperament, a retired ensign, who had been in India, named Russell. These two, with Tone's young wife, spent the summer of 1790 together by the sea. They had little hopes of their own country. Tone turned his thoughts again to emigration, a second time he drew an outline of his colonial scheme, and sent it, not again to Pitt, but to Lord Grenville. The project was not without sense, for Lord Grenville sent him a courteous

acknowledgment, and promised to bear his overtures in mind.

‘If the plan had been followed,’ says Tone, ‘Russell and I were both going instead of planning revolutions in Ireland;’ but Lord Grenville thought no more of the matter, and confessing frankly that personal resentment was the explanation of his subsequent conduct, Tone renewed his vow to make the Cabinet repent. In the winter he founded a rival club in Dublin, composed of spirits like his own. Among the members were Mr. Stack, a clerical fellow of Trinity; Whitly Stokes, the dean, keeper of the college lions, as Tone nicknamed him; Dr. Drennan, a physician; Peter Burrowes, a rising barrister; Thomas Addis Emmett, a barrister also, elder brother of Robert, all of whom left their mark in the development of the Irish drama.

Of this party, Tone liked Whitly Stokes the best, their opinions most nearly coinciding; the sole fault of Stokes being that he was not for lawless measures. ‘What he would highly that he would holily.’ A reservation which Tone early concluded it would be impossible to allow.

The Bastille fell in July 1789; in 1790 Burke published his letters on the French Revolution, to which Tom Paine, replied with ‘The Rights of Man.’ Tone and his friends were for Tom Paine, and young Ireland was of the same way of thinking. In Tone’s own words, ‘oppressed, plundered, insulted Ireland’ was electrified into life.<sup>1</sup> The Northern Whig Club, spite

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone, by himself.*

of its aristocratic connections, was scarcely less sympathetic. The Irish Parliament was dissolved in the summer, and the members spared neither their fortunes nor their energies to defeat the Castle candidates. Robert Stewart,<sup>1</sup> then an ardent patriot, carried Down in the popular interest after a struggle of fifty-four days. Sir Hercules Rowley and Mr. O'Neil, both members of the club, were returned for Antrim. They were carried through Belfast in a triumphal car with cannons firing. Volunteers, revived for the occasion, marched at their side; and Hibernia walked before them with a wreath in one hand and a pole with a cap of liberty in the other. The town was illuminated at night. Fires blazed on all the adjoining hill tops, and the Volunteer Light Dragoons met on Bunker's Hill, name of significant omen, to swear that they would never lay down their arms till their country was free.<sup>2</sup> The city determined that in the ensuing year it would observe the 14th of July with becoming solemnity as the anniversary of the fall of the Bastile.

Fired with these scenes, and seeing, as he supposed, the fields ripening for the harvest, Ensign Russell, who was now living at Belfast, invited Tone to sketch an outline of policy to be ready for the celebration. Tone replied with composing a singular and characteristic paper, which, however extravagant and absurd it may appear, yet must be read also with the recollection that it kindled a fire in Ireland which a

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Castlereagh, then twenty-one years old.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Belfast*, p. 345.



hundred thousand men scarcely sufficed to extinguish, and which cost sixty thousand Irish lives.

The object was to form a society of 'United Irishmen.' It was to be instituted 'with the secrecy and something of the ceremonial of Freemasonry; secrecy to pique curiosity; ceremonial to strike the soul through the senses, and, addressing the whole man, animate his philosophy by the energy of his passions.'

'Secrecy,' writes Tone, 'is expedient and necessary. It will make the bond of union more cohesive and the spirit of union more ardent and more condensed. It will envelope the dense flame with a cloud of gloomy ambiguity that will not only facilitate its own agency, but will confound and terrify its enemies by their ignorance of the design, the direction, or the consequences. It will throw a veil over those individuals whose professional prudence might make them wish to lie concealed. . . . A country so great a stranger to itself as Ireland, where North and South and East and West meet to wonder at each other, is not yet prepared for the adoption of one political faith; while there may be individuals from each of these quarters ready to accept such a profession, to propagate it with their best abilities, and, when necessary, with their blood. Our provinces are ignorant of each other; our island is connected, we ourselves are insulated; and distinctions of rank and property and religious persuasion have hitherto been not merely lines of difference, but brazen walls of separation. We are separate nations, met

and settled together, not mingled but convened—uncemented, like the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw, with a head of fine gold, legs of iron, feet of clay—parts that do not cleave to one another.

‘In the midst of an island where manhood has met and meets with such severe humiliation, where selfish men and classes have formed a malignant conspiracy against public good, let our beneficent conspiracy arise—one plot of patriots pledged by solemn adjunction to each other in the service of the people—the people in the largest sense of that momentous word. Let the cement of this constitutional compact be a principle of such strong attraction as completely to overpower all accidental and temporary repulsions, and thus consolidate the scattered and shifting sand of society into an adhesive and immovable caisson, sunk beneath the dark and troubled waters.

‘Our society will not call itself a Whig Club or a Revolution Society. It will not be an aristocracy affecting the language of patriotism. . . . It will not by views merely retrospective stop the march of mankind, or force them back into the lanes and alleys of their ancestors. Let its name be the “Irish Brotherhood.” Let its aim be to make the light of philanthropy—a pale and ineffectual light—converge, and by converging kindle into ardent, energetic, enthusiastic love for Ireland that genuine, unadulterated enthusiasm which descends from a luminous head to a burning heart, and impels the spirit of man to exertions unequivocally great. What is our end? The rights of man in

Ireland! The greatest happiness of the greatest numbers in this island; the inherent and indefeasible claims of every free nation to rest in this nation; the will and power to be happy; to pursue the common weal as an individual pursues his private welfare, and to stand in insulated independence an imperatorial people.

‘The greatest happiness of the greatest number! On the rock of this principle let this Society rest; by this let it judge and determine every political question; and whatever is necessary for this end let it not be counted hazardous, but rather our interest, our duty, our glory, our common religion. . . . Let every member wear, day and night, an amulet round his neck, containing the great principle which unites the brotherhood, in letters of gold on a ribbon striped with all the original colours, and enclosed in a sheath of white silk to represent the pure union of the mingled rays and the abolition of all superficial distinctions, all colours and shades of difference, for the sake of an illustrious end. Let this amulet of union, faith, and honour depend from the neck, and be bound about the body next to the skin, and close to the heart. . . . This is enthusiasm! It is so. And who has a spark of Hibernicism in his nature who would not feel it kindle into a flame of generous enthusiasm? Who that has a drop of sympathy in his heart, and sees how happiness is heaped up in mounds, how misery is diffused and divided among the millions, does not exclaim, “Alas for the suffering, and oh for the power to redress it!” Who is there that has enthusiasm sufficient to such

an exclamation that would not combine with others as honest as himself to make the will live in the act, and to swear he will redress it?

‘Let the Society meet four times a year, and an acting committee once a month. Let these meetings be convivial, but not the transitory patriotism of deep potations. Confidential—the heart open, but the door locked. Conversational—not a debating society. There is too much haranguing in this country already—a very great redundancy of sound. Would that we spoke more laconically and acted more emphatically! and we shall do so when our aim is at something nobler and fairer than even the sublime and beautiful of Mr. Burke—the sublimity of common-sense, the beauty of common weal.

‘Our Society should be chaste and cautious in the selection of members, shunning equally the giddiness of the boy and the sullen indifference to the public good which comes with decline of years. They should be honest Irishmen, of whatever rank, of whatever religion, who know liberty, who love it, who wish to have it, and who will have it.

‘The external business of the Society will be—

‘1. Publications to propagate their principles and effect their ends.

‘2. To keep up communication with the different towns, and to use every exertion to accomplish a national convention of the people of Ireland.

‘3. To communicate with similar societies abroad, as the Jacobin Club in Paris, the Revolution Society in

England, the Committee for reform in Scotland. Let the nations go abreast. Let the interchange of sentiment among mankind concerning the rights of man be as immediate as possible.

‘Eulogies of such men as have deserved well of their country *until death* should be from time to time delivered by one of the brotherhood. Their works should live in a library, to be founded by the Society, and dedicated to liberty; and the portraits of such men should adorn it. Let the shades of the mighty dead look down and consecrate our meetings. The Athenians fastened their edicts on the statues of their ancestors. Let our laws and liberties have a similar attachment, taking heed always to remember what has been too much forgotten, that we are to be ancestors ourselves; and as our bodies moulder down after death, merely to pass into new forms of life, let our spirits preserve a principle of animation to posterity, and germinate from the grave.

‘What time is most applicable for the establishment of this institution? Even now. *Le grand art est dans l’apropos.* Why is administration so imperious? Because the *nation* does not act. The Whig Club is not a transfusion from the people. We do not understand that club, and they do not feel for us. When the aristocracy comes forward, the people fall backward. When the people come forward, the aristocracy, fearful of being left behind, insinuate themselves into our ranks, and rise into timid leaders or treacherous auxiliaries. They mean to make us their instruments. Let us

rather make them our instruments. One of the two must happen. . . . On the 14th of July, which shall ever commemorate the French Revolution, let this Society pour out their first libation to European liberty, eventually the liberty of the world, and with their hands joined in each other, and their eyes raised to heaven, in His presence who breathed into them an everliving soul, let them swear to maintain the rights and prerogatives of this nation as men, and the rights and prerogatives of Ireland as an independent people. "Dieu et mon droit" is the motto of kings. "Dieu et la liberté," exclaimed Voltaire, when he first beheld Franklin. "Dieu et nos droits," let Irishmen cry aloud to each other—the cry of mercy, of justice, and of victory.<sup>1</sup>

Accompanying this singular production were a series of resolutions for Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, adopted and printed immediately afterwards in the programme of the society, and a private letter evidently addressed to Russell,<sup>2</sup> in which the writer explained his views more fully than in a paper intended for wider circulation.<sup>3</sup>

'The foregoing resolutions,' said the writer, 'contain my true and sincere opinion of the state of this country,

<sup>1</sup> Abridged from a copy in the State Paper Office.—Irish MSS., June 1790, privately furnished to the Government, and transmitted by Lord Westmoreland.

*Irishmen.* Dublin, 1794, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> A copy of this letter also fell into the Viceroy's hands, probably by treachery, and was enclosed to the Cabinet in the same packet.

<sup>3</sup> *Acts of the Society of United*

so far as in this present juncture it may be advisable to publish it. They fall short of the truth, but truth itself must sometimes condescend to temporise. My unalterable opinion is that the bane of Irish prosperity is the influence of England. I believe that influence will ever be extended while the connection between the countries continues. Nevertheless, as I know, that opinion is for the present too hardy, though a little time may establish it universally, I have not made it a part of the resolutions.

‘The Whig Club are not sincere friends to the popular cause. They dread the people as much as the Castle does. I dare say that my Lord Charlemont, and I am pretty sure that Mr. Grattan, would hesitate at the resolutions which I send. I beg you will dismiss the respect for great names. Read them, and read what I have now said,<sup>1</sup> and determine impartially between us. I have alluded to the Catholics, but so remotely as not to alarm the most cautious Protestant. It is, indeed, nonsense to talk of a reform in Ireland in which they shall not have their due share. To fear the Catholics is a vulgar and ignorant prejudice. Look at France and America; the Pope burnt in effigy at Paris; the English Catholic at this

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<sup>1</sup> The resolutions were three :—  
 ‘1. That the weight of English influence was so great as to require *a cordial union of all the people of Ireland to maintain liberty.*

‘2. That the only constitutional

method of opposing that influence was by Reform of Parliament.

‘3. That no Reform was practicable which did not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion.’

hour seceding from his Church; a thousand arguments crowd on me; but it is unnecessary here to dwell on them. The opportunity for publishing the resolutions will be the 14th of July at the commemoration of the French Revolution—that morning-star of liberty to Ireland.'



## SECTION III.

As a preparation for the celebration of the taking of the Bastille at Belfast, the Northern Whig Club held a preliminary meeting on the 15th of June, the anniversary of the signature of Magna Charta. The aristocratic composition of that body was unsatisfactory to the ardent reformers. Its sentiments were considered timid and hesitating. Liberal public opinion nevertheless must have been far gone, even in those circles, when a society which contained Charlemont, Moira, Lord Clifford, Robert Stewart,<sup>1</sup> and Sir Hercules Rowley could accept as toasts, and drink with wild enthusiasm, 'the Revolution,' 'the National Assembly of France,' 'the Majesty of the People,' 'Tom Paine,' and 'the Rights of Man.'<sup>2</sup> In the fête which followed on the 14th, Belfast rivalled Paris in extravagance. The event of the day was described as the grandest in human history. The heart that could not sympathise with it was declared depraved. The ceremonial commenced with a procession. The Volunteer companies, re-filled to their old numbers, marched first, with banners and music. A battery of cannon followed, and behind the cannon a portrait of Mirabeau. Then a gigantic triumphal car, bearing a broad sheet of canvas, on which was painted the opening of the

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Castlereagh.    <sup>2</sup> *History of Belfast*, pp. 347-8.

Bastile dungeons. In the foreground was the wasted figure of the prisoner who had been confined there thirty years, melting all eyes to tears; in the near distance the doors of the cells flung back, disclosing the skeletons of dead victims or living wretches writhing in chains and torture. On the reverse of the canvas Hibernia was seen reclining, one hand and one foot in shackles, and a Volunteer artilleryman holding before her radiant eyes the image of Liberty.

The Whig Club brought up the rear, walking two-and-two, in green cockades, the entire Society except Charlemont being present to do honour to the occasion, and among them, therefore, O'Neil, Moira, and Castlereagh.

In the evening three hundred and fifty patriots sat down to dinner in the Linen Hall. They drank to the King of Ireland. They drank to Washington, the ornament of mankind. They drank to Grattan, Molyneux, Franklin and Mirabeau—these last two amidst applause that threatened to shake the building to the ground.

Belfast was in fine revolutionary condition, and was therefore well selected by Tone as the scene of his first operations. In his diary he informs the world 'that he was determined to subvert the tyranny of an execrable Government, and make Ireland free.' He was sure of the Catholics. 'He knew that there existed, however it might be concealed, in the breast of every Irish Catholic an inextinguishable abhorrence of the English name and power.' He was sure, too, of sympathy from

the Presbyterian Liberals of the Ulster towns. He hoped to gain all the Presbyterians, seeing how long they had suffered from the proud Establishment. But the Catholic question was a difficulty, both in town and country. There were unpleasant rumours of the Peep-of-Day Boys, of farmers in the Down and Antrim hills so far behind their age as to think more of the defence of Derry than the taking of the Bastile, to hate Popery worse than they hated England. To them he addressed himself in a pamphlet which his friends in the North printed and circulated. In October he went down to Belfast with his friend Russell, to inaugurate there the first lodge of the society which he had succeeded at last in founding, and to contend against anti-Catholic prejudice. In his diary he has drawn the portraits of the two bold youths who were setting forth to measure swords with the British Empire, and of the dreams which inspired them.

'October. Belfast.—Secret Committee. Dined with Sinclair.<sup>1</sup> Politics and wine. Paine's book. P. P.<sup>2</sup> very drunk.

'October 16 (Sunday).—Vile sermon against smuggling and about loyalty, and all that. Put the question to D. relative to Ireland's existence independent of England. D.'s opinion decidedly for independence. France would help, and Ireland without debt would spring up like an air-balloon and leave England far behind.

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<sup>1</sup> A leading Belfast Republican.

<sup>2</sup> His friend Russell.

'October 21.—Dinner with D. Battle on the Catholic question. They agree to the justice of emancipation, but boggle at expediency — damned nonsense, Russell eloquent. Ready to fight. Arguments over a bottle foolish.

'October 23.—Dinner at A. Stewart's, with a parcel of squires from Down. Persuaded myself and Russell afterwards that we were hungry. Went to Donegal Arms. Supped on a lobster. Drunk; ill-natured to Russell. Mem., to do so no more.

'October 24.—Woke sick. Couldn't eat.

'October 25.—Dinner at ——. Furious battle on the Catholic question. Neither party convinced. Damned stuff. Home early. Russell well on, but not quite gone,' &c., &c.

Under such auspices, and by such men, the Society of United Irishmen was launched at Belfast; and a start thus made, the two apostles of liberty returned to Dublin, to found a sister lodge in the metropolis. Simon Butler, younger brother of Lord Mountgarret, was the first chairman. Napper Tandy, 'with the frenzy-rolling eye,' volunteered as secretary. On the 9th of November the first meeting was held, at the Eagle, in Eustace Street, when the three resolutions already accepted in the North were adopted as principles of action: to emancipate Ireland from English influence, to reform the Parliament, and to unite the people of Ireland of all creeds and races in a common bond. The third resolution was essential to the first and second, yet to obtain its acceptance proved a harder

task than Tone anticipated. He was assured of the hatred of the Catholics to England. The hatred was equally intense against Protestants, Presbyterian as well as Anglican, and a signal illustration of it had just shown itself in Ulster. Mr. Jackson, of Armagh, who died in 1787, had left an estate to maintain schools where there was to be no distinction of religion. These schools were condemned by the priests. The trustees were repeatedly fired at. In the spring of 1791 the house of one of the masters, Alex. Barclay, was broken open. Three men rushed in, twisted a cord about his neck till they pressed his tongue out, and cut it off. They cut off the fingers and thumb of his right hand. They seized his wife, cut out her tongue, and cut off her fingers. They then cut out her child's tongue, and slashed away the calves of his legs. The one offence which the man had committed was the teaching in a school of which the priests disapproved. They made no concealment. They went with torches along the road to their work as if for a public purpose. This act was the admiration of the barony, and it was said openly that unless the schools were abandoned all concerned in them should suffer in the same way.<sup>1</sup>

The mutilation of Barclay was a spurt from the old fire of 1641. There were other Catholics of course who, as in 1641 also, abhorred the cruelties

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<sup>1</sup> 'Report of the Trustees of the Jackson Charity,' February 1, 1791.  
—Musgrave's *History of the Irish Rebellion*, vol. i.

which brought discredit on their cause, who represented themselves as eager for an opportunity of showing their loyalty, who undertook, if Government would trust them with arms, to be the first to repress and punish the atrocities of their wilder brethren. For their sakes the penal code had been relaxed. The Castle had been long on kindly terms with their prelates. Liberal opinion in England had long been working in their favour. Pitt, an advocate for Reform, was an advocate equally for Catholic Emancipation. He had sought the opinion of the Universities of France and Spain, on the charges generally alleged against Catholics, that their allegiance to their sovereign was subordinate to their allegiance to the Pope; that they held that heretics might be lawfully put to death, and that no faith was to be kept with them. The Universities had unanimously disavowed doctrines which they declared at once inhuman and unchristian, and on the strength of the disavowal the British Parliament had repealed the Penal Acts of William for England and Scotland, restored to the Catholics the free use of their chapels, and re-admitted them to the magistracy.

Which of the two parties among the Catholics of Ireland would direct the action of the general body, if similar confidence was extended to them in that island, might still be uncertain. Pitt believed, on the whole, that the Liberal policy would be the safest policy; that the savage spirit was sustained by the disabilities, and that the hatred on which Irish faction

relied would disappear before judicious conciliation. The Belfast demonstration made him the more anxious to anticipate the projected union of disaffection. As affairs in France assumed a darker aspect, the great antagonist of the Revolution desired to rally to the side of order every influence which could be called Conservative. Of such influences the most powerful was religion, and where could he find a surer friend than in the ancient Church which the Jacobins were trampling under their feet? He saw before him a certain struggle with the potent, overcrowding spirit which was shaking Europe to its foundations, and with such a prospect the Irish problem became of pressing consequence. Disaffection in Ireland had been a mischievous factor in the war with America. A union of Irishmen in the interest of nationality and revolution might prove incomparably more dangerous, while there never could be a fairer occasion to recover the loyalty of the respectable portion of the Irish Catholic community, and to give them an opportunity of washing out the stains which clung to them in the traditions of the past.

In these views Pitt had an ardent supporter in Edmund Burke. Swept as he was into the stream of English politics, identified with English statesmanship, and occupied with the great questions of the imperial and internal policy of the British dominions, Burke had never forgotten the land of his birth, and had never missed an opportunity of being of service to her. He read her history with a

prejudiced affection, which saw the wrongs which she had suffered, and was blind to the crimes which had provoked them. He had been her advocate in the first Whiteboy insurrection. He had braved the anger of his Bristol constituents by reprobating the restrictions on her trade. He had denounced the Irish Penal Laws as without example for inhumanity and cruelty, although they were almost a transcript from the laws passed in France on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, although the administration of the laws against Protestants in Papal Italy and Spain were more cruel by far than the administration of the laws in Ireland against Catholics. His opinions on these subjects had long been openly expressed. The conviction became more keen with the progress of the French Revolution. Welcome as it had been to him at its dawn, when it appeared only to be the rising of an oppressed people against aristocratic tyranny, the Revolution became an object of abhorrence to him when it declared war against priests. Burke was not himself a Catholic, but as little was he a Protestant. His sympathies were with the old faith. His most intimate friends were Catholics to the end, and at the end even more than at the beginning. His advice to Pitt, his advice to the world, was to save his countrymen from the revolutionary tempter by restoring to them the privileges of citizenship.

Thus the Irish Catholics, who in the eyes of Swift were hewers of wood and drawers of water, doomed to immediate extinction, and protracting their waning



existence by the condescending toleration of the Government, found themselves with two roads opening before them, either of which might restore them to the ascendancy which they had lost at the Boyne and at Aghrim. Tone was doubtless right in saying that at the bottom they all hated England; but some of them hated the Revolution worse, and dreaded besides, the possible consequences to them of another war; while the fiercer spirits, identifying religion with nationality, dreaming of the recovery of their lost estates, and of revenge on the old oppressors, looked, like Phelim O'Neil and Roger Moore, in 1641, to a general overthrow of authority. Let the invader be swept first out of the island with any help that offered itself; other accounts could be settled afterwards, when they had the island to themselves.

The Catholic Bishops and clergy, Irish at heart, yet terrified at the aspect of France, were inclined rather to order and to the English connection, if England would give them what they asked. By them the Catholic Committee in Dublin had hitherto submitted to be guided. In 1790 they prayed Parliament for a further removal of their disabilities. Not a member of the House of Commons could be found to present their petition. Confident in Pitt's disposition towards them, the Catholic prelates published a letter condemning revolutionary principles. At the beginning of 1791 a sub-committee advised another attempt of the same kind, not to ask for definite measures of relief, but mildly to express a hope that

they were not to continue strangers in their own land, to declare their confidence in the benignity of their Sovereign, and their willingness to submit their claims to the wisdom and benevolence of the Legislature. The leaven of the new spirit had by this time penetrated the Catholic organisation. A majority in the General Committee refused to sue any longer for rights which they were entitled to demand; and relying on promises from Belfast, exclaimed against an attitude which would encourage a continuance of tyranny.

The line of division became thus definitely apparent. Lord Kenmare, Lord Fingal, Lord Gormanstown, and sixty prelates and gentlemen, withdrew from an association with whose views they were no longer in harmony. The Government accepted the seceders as the true representatives of Catholic sentiment. In September, after the Belfast demonstration, John Keogh, a Dublin merchant, a man of some ability and in the Bishops' confidence, went to London, and had an interview with Pitt. He was told generally that England would make no objection if the Irish Parliament would admit Catholics to the Bar and to the Commission of the Peace. The franchise was a future question which would be open to consideration. Lord Westmoreland was instructed to smooth the way towards concessions, and on the 21st of November he was able to inform Dundas 'that he had pretty well reconciled most of the friends of Government to the policy of following the example of England.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Westmoreland to Dundas, November 21, 1791.' S.P.O.

## SECTION IV.

1790 THE plot was now thickening. Before proceeding with the story attention must be recalled to the proceedings of the Irish Parliament during the first two years of Lord Westmoreland's administration.

Lord Buckingham had shown the agitators of the House of Commons that Government was too strong for them. They revenged themselves by abusing Lord Buckingham's memory, and worrying, though they could not control, his successor. In the debate on the Address at the opening of the session of 1790, when Mr. Grattan produced as usual the list of Ireland's grievances, Egan, a blunt, humorous barrister, spoke of Buckingham as 'our late execrated Chief Governor;' of Ireland as 'the political Botany Bay of Great Britain;' of the Irish Parliament as being, 'like the Temple of Jerusalem, polluted with money-changers.'<sup>1</sup>

Grattan denounced Buckingham's corruption. The friends of Government were insolent in their majority. Dennis Brown spoke of the complaints of undue influence as 'the clamour of jobbers and speculators, who had been repelled by the Viceroy with contempt, and who therefore reviled and abused him.' Toler ridiculed the Opposition as apostles of revolution, whose language in plain English meant, 'Swallow our

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, January 22, 1790.

faith, and it shall make you whole, and damn him everlastingly who will not thus think of our politics.' Beresford, the new Commissioner of Revenue, carried the war into the enemy's camp. He admitted that 'there was a certain influence in the State;' and 'it was better placed,' he said, 'in a known and responsible power than in the indentured apprentices of English faction.'

The inglorious battle raged from day to day, the patriots dashing themselves against the chains, and flinging into words the passion for which they could find no escape in action.

Beresford's defence brought up George Ponsonby. 'Good God, sir,' said the future Chancellor, 'how long shall we be told that influence is not too great; we who saw in the last session the very members who joined in the censure of the Viceroy go up ten days after to him cringing and crawling with an address of congratulation? If the house does not resist such a system, there will be a day when the contest will rest between the people and them, and the nation as a nation will do themselves justice.' 'Let Ministers beware,' said Lawrence Parsons, 'how they teach the people that nothing short of separation will attain for them good government. Will any minister of England dare to say to the people of Ireland, You are an independent kingdom, the laws of England no longer bind you? You have gained all that you asked. But I will make you feel that you have gained nothing. I will increase my influence

over you and your Parliament, and I will keep you to the end of time a degraded and depressed dependency.'

'Modern patriotism,' said Mr. Johnson, with a sarcasm which might have come from the Dean of St. Patrick, 'is to the political what a modern infection is to the animal constitution. They are equally the children of licentiousness, equally manifest their vigour by their venom, and nothing but the application of a metallic poison can stop the progress of either. Gold is to the political what mercury is to the animal constitution, and the ministers and physicians who apply them are equally justified by the necessity.'<sup>1</sup>

'The sale of peerages,' said Curran, with a counter-thrust, 'is as notorious as that of the cast horses in the Castle Yard; the publicity the same, the terms not very different, the horses not warranted sound, and the other animals warranted rotten. When arguments fail we are threatened! A million will be expended in bribing the country at the next election—to make us what? A catacomb of ministerial mummies—not a scene of honest contest, not a temple of liberty, but a den of thieves.'

Among gentle recriminations such as these the session of 1790 passed away, no misgiving, it appeared, occurring to the patriot orators that among a people so willing to be bribed, what they called liberty was for ever impossible.

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, February 4, 1790.

Early in the summer there was a dissolution and a general election. The patriots carried Dublin and a few counties in Ulster, but on the whole Curran's prophecy was fulfilled. The owners of property were frightened by the revolution, and the Castle majority was rather increased than diminished. The novel feature in the new House was the introduction into it of three men who, in their several ways, were to become notable. Robert Stewart, the future Castlereagh, was returned, as was said above, for Down; Arthur Wesley, or Wellesley, for Trim; and Arthur O'Connor for Philipstown.

A short session was held in July to choose a Speaker. The strength of parties was exhibited in the selection of John Foster against William <sup>1790</sup> Ponsonby, who was put forward by the patriots. In the succeeding January the House assembled for business in a mood conspicuously sobered by the events on the Continent. Grattan, as the day seemed going against him, was more than usually magnificent, but his oratory failed of its effect. Mervyn Archdall said, and the House seemed to agree with him, that the public owed more to the practical motions of honourable gentlemen who usually sate in silence<sup>1</sup> than to invective and brilliant rhetoric, which died as it flashed and left no mark behind it. To bid Grattan cease his oratory was to bid him cease to be, for there was nothing else which he could do. How little Grattan knew of the real

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<sup>1</sup> He was referring particularly | for a committee of inquiry into  
to Mr. La Touche, who had moved | the increase of whisky-shops.

needs of Ireland, how careless he could be on subjects which furnished no room for appeal to political passion, he had now a remarkable opportunity of showing.

There was in Dublin an institution called the Foundling Hospital. It had large private funds, and was assisted liberally by grants from Parliament. Three hundred peers and gentlemen were the governors, and twenty-one at least were required to be present at the periodical meetings of the board. Sir John Blaquiere, in bringing a report of the condition of the hospital before the House, stated that from the day of its foundation as many as twenty-one governors had never been in attendance save when some office was to be given away. They had delegated their authority to the treasurer. The treasurer had been bedridden for six years. In consequence, Sir John had to mention circumstances 'too horrible for the ear,' which the reporter, for the honour of his country, thought it necessary to conceal.<sup>1</sup> In substance he stated that the number of infants received in the past year into the hospital was 2,180, and that of that number as many as 2,087 were dead or unaccounted for. A story so startling was received with outcries of incredulity. Ireland's character was at stake before the world. The Corporation of Dublin met and made inquiries, and reported that the charge was utterly without foundation. Blaquiere had moved for leave to introduce a Bill to remodel the governing body.

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, March 2, 1791.

Grattan, as member for the city, presented a petition that leave be refused, and spoke warmly in vindication of the existing management. Blaquiere was too sure of his ground to be beaten from it by clamour. He was surprised, he said, that so eminent a person as Mr. Grattan should have become the advocate of abuses which disgraced the society of men. He repeated that out of 2,187 children introduced in one year into the establishment more than 2,000 had disappeared. He held in his hand, he said, a return for the last ten years which had been given upon oath. In that time 19,368 children had been entered on the books, and almost 17,000 were dead or missing.

A committee of inquiry was appointed. The condition of the hospital was sifted to the bottom. 1791  
The result was laid before the House by Blaquiere in the ensuing year. The average annual number of infants who survived admission to this beautiful institution, taken on a large number of years, was 130. The annual expenses were 16,000*l.* Each child, therefore, who was saved from death was costing the public 110*l.* He expected to find, he said, that his original information had understated the frauds, but had exaggerated the cruelty. He had been sorry to find that although the robbery was, as he anticipated, greater, the murders were no fewer than he before declared. The wretched little ones were sent up from all parts of Ireland, ten or twelve of them thrown together into a 'kish,' or basket, forwarded on a low-backed car, and so bruised and crushed and shaken at their journey's end that half



of them were taken out lifeless and were flung into the dung-heap.

The Irish members were not especially soft-hearted, but they could not listen without emotion to so horrible a tale. One speaker appealed to his fox-hunting friends whether they would not be more careful in transmitting the whelps of their hounds. Dennis Browne said truly, that of all stories he had ever read or heard of, the report of the committee was the most horrible.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the actual discharge of the common duties of humanity in Dublin in the days when Ireland had her own Parliament, and patriotic hearts were at white-heat to raise their country in the scale of nations. But the popular tribunes, who were so busy with the removal of ideal grievances, had no leisure for the petty details of crime and misery. Sir John Blaquiere was no political saint, but he could see the horrors of wholesale infanticide. Grattan preferred to rave against corruption, and even in his raving was but half-sincere. When he divided the House upon the mode in which the Castle influence was exerted, Arthur O'Connor, the most advanced Radical in the House, voted against him. The Castle majority had been created only to overcome the yet grosser monopoly of power and patronage by the Boyles and Ponsonbys. O'Connor refused to assist Grattan in re-invigorating an aristocracy 'who had misgoverned Ireland from the day of the conquest.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, March 12, 1792.

<sup>2</sup> *Irish Debates*, March 19, 1791.

## SECTION V.

THE session of 1791 was as barren as its predecessor. The working forces of the drama were no longer in the Parliament. Could the Catholics be kept from dangerous courses, they had a prospect of immediate and perhaps complete emancipation from the English Cabinet. The more disturbing, therefore, to their moderate friends in both countries was the institution and rapid growth of the United Irishmen. At Beaconsfield especially they were watched with an emotion which became at last unbearable. Mr. Richard Burke, as often happens with the children of men of genius, resembled his father in the form and manner of his mind. The intellect only was absent, and the place of it was supplied by vanity. In his own family his defects were invisible. Edmund Burke regarded Richard as immeasurably his own superior. They had met and spoken with Keogh when he was in London on the business of the Catholic Committee. It was then perhaps that Richard Burke offered his services to reconcile the two Catholic factions, and secure for both the confidence of the British Government.

No time was to be lost. The Dublin Lodge of United Irishmen contained already many Catholics. It was even spoken of as a Catholic society.<sup>1</sup> Napper

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Westmoreland to Dundas, November 21, 1791.'

Tandy, the noisiest of the demagogues, was its secretary, and the violence of its manifestoes was fast neutralising the efforts of the Viceroy to reconcile influential Protestants to emancipation.

Describing himself as the agent of the Catholic Committee, young Burke waited on Pitt and Dundas. They expressed their pleasure that the Irish Catholics should have chosen a representative whose name was a security that they did not mean to join with the revolutionists. They acknowledged their own general wish to see the Catholics restored to their rights as citizens. But Pitt, it is likely, saw the character of the person with whom he was dealing—and declined to say anything specific till he knew the sentiments of the Irish Government. Richard Burke said that he was going himself to Dublin. He asked to be allowed to correspond privately with the Cabinet. Pitt declined to communicate with him except through the Secretary at the Castle. He begged to be allowed to take over with him 'a confidential communication of the sentiments which Mr. Pitt had expressed,' that he might show it to his friends. Pitt told him positively 'he could not gratify him in that matter.' He asked whether Mr. Pitt would recommend him to go. Pitt said that he must judge for himself, and could not advise. He consented, however, to give Burke a letter of introduction to the Lord-Lieutenant. 'From the anxiety which Mr Burke expressed that the Catholics and Dissenters should not form a union together, the Cabinet had

no desire to restrain though they could not hinder his journey.'<sup>1</sup>

Such was the account given by Dundas of this interview, and, had he told the whole truth, Westmoreland would have had no cause of complaint. But in the unguarded freedom of a private conversation the Ministers had evidently gone further than Dundas acknowledged. They had allowed Burke to talk at length to them on the history of Ireland, to dilate on the penal laws, to represent the Catholics as the harmless victims of Protestant tyranny, and perhaps unconsciously they had permitted these views to influence their policy. The same packet which carried Burke to Dublin carried a public and a private letter from Dundas to Westmoreland. The public letter instructed him to recommend to the Irish Parliament the concessions which had been already made in England, the admission of the Catholics to the bar and the magistracy, the repeal of the Intermarriage Act, and the repeal of the law which forbade them to possess arms. On the franchise, too, the language was scarcely ambiguous. The Viceroy was not formally directed to make enfranchisement a Government measure. It was admitted to be dangerous. But he was informed that 'the Cabinet considered that the risk to the Protestant interest would be greater by the total exclusion of the Catholics than by their admission.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Dundas to Westmoreland, January 29, 1792. Private.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, December 26, 1791.

Such instructions were, to say the least of them, extremely questionable. The franchise was a point on which Protestant opinion in Ireland was passionately sensitive, and on which the Catholic Committee was itself divided. It was still withheld even in England, and at that very moment Fingal, Kenmare, Gormans-town, and the other moderate Catholics who had seceded from the more violent faction, were sending in addresses, in which they deprecated the premature agitation of so critical a question,<sup>1</sup> and desired to leave their pretensions to the discretion of the Legislature. For the Cabinet to make itself the advocate of immediate action and to throw the responsibility  
 1792 of refusal on the Irish Parliament was ungenerous and ill-advised. But this was not all. The secret communication which accompanied the official despatch was of a far more serious character.<sup>2</sup>

‘In your private letter,’ Lord Westmoreland wrote in reply, ‘I am directed to impress on the minds of leading people, *as a guide for their decision in the present discussion*, that they must not expect the power and resources of England to be exerted in any contest that may arise for pre-eminence or power between religious distinctions of Irishmen ; that it is your decided opinion all such differences, as far as regards political considerations, should be done away. I must tell you the inevitable results of communicating these sentiments

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<sup>1</sup> December 27, 1791. Printed | Paper Office, but the substance of  
 in *Plowden*. | it can be gathered from Lord

<sup>2</sup> This letter is not in the State | Westmoreland’s reply.

of yours. The fears and jealousies that universally affect the Protestant mind are not confined to Parliament, but affect almost every individual and every public body. The steadiest friends of British government apprehend that indulgence will give the Catholics strength to press for admission to the State. In this they see the ruin of political power to the Protestants, and—trifling as you may consider the danger—a total change of the property of the country. The final consequence will be a confederacy of the Protestants, with very few exceptions, to resist every concession. They will resolve to support their own situation by their own power. You will lose for the Catholics the very indulgence which you desire to procure. You will cause the collision which it is your object to prevent. The Catholic body can only act against the Protestant by outrage and intimidation, and you will be obliged by the necessary principles of government to spill the blood of the very people whom the expectation of your indifference may have raised to a state of ferment. The next consequence will be a general confederacy against the present Administration, the Protestant interest considering themselves made a sacrifice to false policy or resentment. What is the state of this country? The Government strong; the Parliament well-disposed; the country quiet; the Catholics of respectable landed property and clergy disavowing every turbulent sentiment, stepping forward and separating themselves from the agitators. Some concession is due to them, but the publication of your

sentiments would at once shut the door. Why sacrifice our present strength? Why sacrifice an old and established policy which has for a century maintained the Government of Ireland, to the intimidation of Napper Tandy and his associates at the head of the lower rank of Catholics in Dublin unconnected with the nobility, landed gentry, or clergy of their communion?

‘If I am to understand that I am directed to endeavour to reconcile the minds of Protestants to the English concessions, or admission to the franchise, by an information or intimation that England will not interfere in any contest produced by refusal, and that even those concessions are *to be considered as a prelude to the abolition of all religious distinctions*, I must request you will again take the sense of his majesty’s confidential servants, and if they continue of the mind that such language shall be held, that you will send me positive directions how I am to proceed, that I may not be counted as responsible.’

The writing of the private letter had, unfortunately, not been the limit of Dundas’s rashness. What he had written to Westmoreland he had said to the impetuous youth who was coming forward as the Catholic champion. Young Burke had rushed over open-mouthed, declaring himself empowered to inform the Catholic Committee of the real intentions of Mr. Pitt’s Administration. He called on the Secretary, Major Hobart, at the Castle, and presented Pitt’s

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Westmoreland to Dundas, January, 1792. Private.’ Abridged. S.P.O.

letter. Hobart invited him to his house, and talked freely with him on the subject of his mission, but soon found 'he would not continue on that footing,' but insisted that he had separate authority from the Cabinet.<sup>1</sup> The introduction from the Prime Minister gave a quasi countenance to this strange pretension. Mr. Burke's next proceeding was to furnish Hobart with a dissertation on the rebellion of 1641, and to protest, in the Committee's name, against the reception or publication of any more moderate addresses from the loyal Catholics. 'If such a step was persevered in,' he said, 'it would lay the foundation of a complicated and incurable civil war.'<sup>2</sup>

Hobart wrote to Dundas, enclosing this production, and informing him of the behaviour of his protégé. 'I should undervalue your understanding,' he said, 'if I troubled you with a comment upon this composition: the folly and insolence of it is in keeping with the whole of his conduct. There is not a man in the country with whom he has conversed, except those belonging to the Catholic Committee, that does not consider him the most barefaced incendiary that ever hazarded the peace of the country. He has made many people believe that the English Cabinet has determined to sacrifice the Protestants of Ireland to the Catholics.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Major Hobart to Dundas, January 17.' S.P.O.

Parliament and the native Irish.

<sup>2</sup> Alluding perhaps to the difference between the Kilkenny

<sup>3</sup> 'Major Hobart to Dundas, January 17, 1792. Private.' S.P.O.



Dundas savagely disclaimed having given Burke authority to speak for the Administration,<sup>1</sup> but he could not dispel the impression already created, nor did the disclaimer arrive in time to prevent most serious confusion. The Catholic Committee, relying on Burke's language, denounced the Kenmare address. Dr. McKenna, a prominent member of the advanced faction, issued a counter-manifesto. Burke called on Fitzgibbon to inform him that all communications of the Castle with the Catholics must pass through the Committee, and to tell him 'that if at some early period the Catholics were to be admitted to seats in Parliament,' the Committee would for the present be contented with the English concessions.<sup>2</sup> On reflection he felt that he had been too modest. Preparatory to the meeting of Parliament he conveyed to Hobart the Committee's ultimatum. Their present demand was for admission to the bar, to the magistracy, to the grand and petty juries, and for a right of voting at the county elections. 'I shall be happy,' he said, 'to receive the answer of Government as soon as is convenient on these points. If I am not favoured with it before next Saturday, I shall conclude that your silence proceeds from a natural reluctance to employ your pen in conveying to me the disagreeable

<sup>1</sup> 'To Westmoreland, January 29. Private.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Edward Cooke to Bernard Scrope, January 11. Private.' S.P.O.

Fitzgibbon spoke of McKenna's

manifesto, and called it conceited bombast. Burke said that for himself he highly approved of it, and that Grattan, who had seen it before it was printed, approved of it also.

intelligence that the representations made to Government by the Catholics of Ireland have failed of success, and I shall inform my clients accordingly.' <sup>1</sup>

Never was Irish Viceroy in such a situation as Lord Westmoreland. Parliament was to meet on the 19th of January, and as yet there had been no <sup>1792</sup> time to receive from England a retraction of the ill-considered language of Dundas. A son of Edmund Burke had appeared in Dublin as the agent of a revolutionary body, yet introduced by the Prime Minister, declaring himself in the confidence of the Cabinet, and insisting on measures unhappily identical with those recommended in the private letters of the Home Secretary. It was hardly possible to doubt that he was speaking the truth. He was telling the Catholics that if they chose to rebel they had nothing to fear from England. Dundas had said the same thing, and had not yet unsaid it. The most moderate Catholics were beginning to ask 'how it was to be expected that they should desist from pressing the point of suffrage, when it was thrown at their heads by the Ministers of England?'

'If you suppose,' wrote Major Hobart to Dundas, 'that the Protestants will yield without a struggle, be assured you are misinformed. Let me impress upon your mind that the connection between England and Ireland rests absolutely on Protestant ascendancy. Abolish distinctions, and you create a Catholic superiority. If ever the Catholics are persuaded that the

<sup>1</sup> 'Richard Burke to Major Hobart, January 11, 1792.' S.P.O.

Protestants are not certain of English support, they will instantly think it worth while to hazard a conflict. It may be said, What is it to England whether Protestants or Catholics have the pre-eminence in Ireland? It is of as much consequence as the connection between the two countries, for on that it depends. While you maintain the Protestant ascendancy the ruling powers in Ireland look to England as the foundation of their authority. A Catholic Government could maintain itself without the aid of England, and must inevitably produce a separation of the Executive, to be followed by a separation of the countries. You must be aware of all the property which Englishmen possess in Ireland. It will be forfeited on the first appearance of success on the part of the Catholics. Are you prepared to meet the clamours of those who have an interest in property in Ireland? You will never have the country quiet till strong and decided language is held by the British Government on the principle of exclusion from the suffrage—the language which would have answered every purpose before Mr. Burke's arrival. He has so completely impressed an opinion that the British Cabinet has acquiesced, that nothing short of a positive declaration to the contrary will remove the alarm of the Protestants, or check the threatening importunity of the Catholics.'<sup>1</sup>

On the eve of the session the Viceroy called a meeting of such of the servants of the Crown as he

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<sup>1</sup> 'Major Hobart to Dundas, January 17. Private.' S.P.O.

could best depend on—Fitzgibbon,<sup>1</sup> Wolfe,<sup>2</sup> Beresford, the Archbishop of Cashel, Charles Agar,<sup>3</sup> Sir John Parnell,<sup>4</sup> and Prime Serjeant Fitzgerald. He laid before them the instructions of the Cabinet, and invited their opinion. They agreed unanimously that neither 'the point of arms nor of the franchise' could be carried in the present humour of Parliament, and that the attempt to force them would be as impolitic as it would be useless. Beresford objected to the principle of concession, but under the circumstances was inclined to yield unimportant points. The Archbishop was for maintaining the existing law in its fullest stringency.

Westmoreland suggested that if trouble followed on the refusal of the relaxation which the British Parliament had granted, the English Government might decline to support the Protestant party.

The Archbishop said truly that the situations of England and Ireland were totally different. In Ireland the private fortune of every Protestant was at stake. Parnell was scarcely less determined, but considered it might be prudent to give way in trifles till 'the Reform frenzy' had burnt itself out in France. The conclusion at last arrived at was, follow the English model, open the professions, and repeal the Intermarriage Act. The object of Napper Tandy and the Committee was to prevent moderate concessions, to keep

<sup>1</sup> The Chancellor.

<sup>2</sup> Attorney-General, afterwards Lord Kilwarden, and murdered in

Emmett's insurrection.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Lord Somerton.

<sup>4</sup> Chancellor of the Exchequer.

up the ferment. Some effort, it was thought, must be made by the Government to prevent the better-disposed Catholics from falling under their control.

The Council, nevertheless, though admitting the necessity, were still strongly opposed to the mention of the subject from the Throne. Dundas had insisted that the matter should be so handled 'that the grace of the suggestion should belong to Government.' But it was felt that the announcement of concessions in the Speech would confirm the misgivings which had been excited by Burke's language, 'that Ministers had resolved to abandon the Protestant cause.' The Address would commit Parliament before the subject had been discussed.

'Instead of the relaxation of the penal laws having tended to unite Protestants and Catholics,' wrote Westmoreland, as if it was something to be surprised at, 'it has increased the apprehension and hatred.'

It was decided that a Relief Bill should be entrusted to Edmund Burke's friend, Sir Hercules Langrishe, and that Major Hobart should speak in its favour. At the last moment, before the opening of Parliament, the Viceroy called a meeting of the supporters of Government; and to quiet their alarms assured them that neither the suffrage nor the right to arms would be conceded, however violently the Catholics might demand them. Finally, Lord Westmoreland wrote for leave to contradict officially the pretensions to authority which young Burke had advanced. If the Cabinet would 'play fair,' he undertook for the

quiet of the country. The only dangers to be apprehended would arise from a belief that the Home Government was irresolute, and that Burke and not the Viceroy was the true exponent of their sentiments.

Dundas's answer was the strongest condemnation of his past precipitancy, for it showed that neither he nor Pitt had formed any real policy for Ireland, although he had gone so far as to threaten that England might be a passive spectator of a civil war. He deprecated and resented the supposition that the Cabinet 'intended to play what was called a Catholic game.' 'The Cabinet,' he said, 'urged nothing which the Irish Council might think unsafe.' 'They had no bias.' 'They had no interest separate from that of Ireland.' On second thoughts, they considered after all that it was 'inexpedient' to license the Catholics to possess arms; and as for the franchise, they wished only 'that the Protestants should decide for themselves how far a slight concession might safely be made.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Dundas to Westmoreland, January 29, 1792.' S.P.O.

In 'a most private,' separate, and autograph letter of the same date, Dundas adds:—

'I have nothing further to say, except that I and all his Majesty's Ministers have some reason to complain of the spirit and temper which have manifested themselves among our friends in Ireland on this business. If they had made no advances to us on the matter, we should have left it to their own judgment. But all through the summer and autumn they were ex-

pressing their fears to us of a union between the Catholics and the Dissenters. They asked for our opinion, and we gave it. What motive could we have except an anxious concern for the security of the Irish Establishment? Whether we are right or wrong time will show; but there is no imaginable reason why this opinion should have been received with jealousy.

'Mr. Pitt concurs in everything I have said. He and I have not had a shade of difference in our opinion.'

## SECTION VI.

ON the 19th of January the session began which at  
 1792 Pitt's bidding was to open the sluices and make  
 rebellion eventually inevitable. The Speech  
 was silent, as the Council advised, on the great subject.  
 Mr. Grattan, had he dared, would have at once challenged  
 the omission and have entered notice of a Bill to give  
 the Catholics the franchise. But his constituents of  
 Dublin, though their politics were revolutionary, had  
 not divested themselves of Protestant prejudice. The  
 Corporation had insisted that he should take no part  
 in assailing the ascendancy. He could not afford to  
 quarrel with them, and when he rose, as usual, to  
 attack the Address, he confined himself to general  
 invective. In an oration which was considered one  
 of his most splendid efforts he demanded Parliamentary  
 Reform, taking as the ground of his argument the  
 events of the past ten years.

'There was a time,' he said, 'when the vault of  
 liberty could hardly contain the flight of your pinions.  
 Some of you went forth like a giant rejoicing in his  
 strength You now stand like elves at the door of  
 your own Pandemonium. The armed youth of this  
 country like a thousand streams thundered from a  
 thousand hills and filled the plain with congregated  
 waters, in whose mirror was seen for a moment the  
 image of the British Constitution. The waters subside,

the torrents cease, the rill ripples within its own bed, and the boys and children of the village paddle in the brook. By the traffic of Parliament the King is absolute. These Houses are as much an instrument in his hand as a bayonet in the hands of a regiment. Like a regiment, we have an adjutant who sends to the infirmary for the old and to the brothel for the young, and men thus carted to their places to vote for the Minister are called the representatives of the people.'

The oratory flowed for several hours. When the trick of rhetoric is once mastered it may stream for ever. The Irish Parliament was growing weary of it. Sir Hercules Langrishe gave notice, when Grattan sate down, of his intended Catholic Relief Bill. The vexation of the Viceroy was hourly increasing at the gratuitous embarrassment which had been forced upon him. 'I am sure,' wrote Edward Cooke, the Army Secretary, 'that in point of real dignified policy nothing at all ought to be done for the Catholics this session. There is but one mind in the House of Commons. The Administration is obliged to canvass for measures which must weaken Government and lay the groundwork of perpetual discord.'<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Burke's stories,' wrote Major

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<sup>1</sup> 'This country is not known,' other to abolish English influence; Cooke continued. 'It is the most the Irish Ministry in opposition to easily governed in the world, if the the English in principle, and with true line is proceeded upon. How them in acquiescence: the sup- are you now? The British Govern- porters of Government seeing ruin ment: and Grattan coinciding to themselves in standing by ad- in the same measures with different ministration, the Ponsonbies on the views, the one to strengthen, the watch to defeat administration by



Hobart, 'are hourly gaining ground. The effect of them already has produced a determination against all concession however trifling, so I fear we shall carry nothing.'<sup>1</sup> The knot might well have proved insuperable but for the fervid enthusiasm of the English agent of the Catholic Committee. So long as he was supposed to be in the confidence of Pitt, the Irish Radicals had endured Richard Burke for the sake of the advantages which they looked to gain through him. A character less congenial with the Hibernian temperament could not easily have been found. Though sometimes ridiculous themselves, the Irish have the most acute perception of absurdity in others. Richard Burke supposed himself a person of extraordinary genius. His letters and essays show nothing but impassioned commonplace and unbounded vanity. He was brought in contact with men in Dublin who were as much his intellectual superiors as he conceived himself to be theirs. He tried their patience severely, and at times overstrained it. Receiving no reply to the ultimatum which he had addressed to Hobart, he had prepared a petition in the name of the Committee for a full measure of enfranchisement. He was looking for a member of the House of Commons to whom he could entrust it, to be levelled as a thunderbolt at the expected imperfect Bill which was to be introduced by Langrishe. The Opposition members met at Leinster

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gaining the confidence of the Pro- | to Bernard Scrope, January 21  
testant interest.'—'Edward Cooke | 1792.' S.P.O.

<sup>1</sup> 'January 22, 1792.' S.P.O.

House to hear it read. They liked neither the petition nor its author. He said, as if he was conferring a favour, that he was willing to entrust it to any one of them, excepting only to Mr. Egan, who had before objected to expressions in it. Egan, a big coarse man, with a red face, whose wit was as sharp as Curran's, rose amidst general laughter, walked across the room to where Burke was sitting, looked him in the face and bowed deeply. 'Sir,' he said, 'with the highest reverence for your derivation, I entertain none whatever for the modesty of your vocation.'<sup>1</sup> The supposed representative of Pitt, however, was a person with whom it was imprudent to quarrel. Mr. O'Hara at length took charge of the petition, touching it, however, as if it was red-hot iron.

On all grounds it was undesirable to prolong the suspense. On the 25th of January Langrishe's measure was brought in. He spoke with studied <sup>1792</sup> moderation. He spoke of the harshness of the penal laws. He sketched the successive removals of their most oppressive features in 1778 and 1782. He considered that the Catholics ought to be grateful for the concessions which were then made, and he believed, he said, that they were not insensible to the generosity which in so many important respects had replaced them on a level with their fellow-citizens. Other claims were now advanced in their behalf in the name of the rights of man. Mr. Paine might know of such rights.

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<sup>1</sup> *Life of Grattan*, vol. iv. p. 57.

To him the word was without meaning. There might be natural rights in a state of nature, but there were none in political society. His interest in the Catholics had been diminished by recent publications which professed to express their sentiments. If the Catholics embraced those opinions the State could not embrace them in the Constitution; and if the House of Commons yielded to intimidation it would betray the country. He was able to say, however, that the influential Catholics, laity and clergy alike, repudiated and denounced these extravagant pretensions. They had been tempted to combine with the Dissenters for revolution, but they had refused to taste the cup of sedition. Neither he nor they were advocates for a sudden extravagant transfer of power and authority. He would ask the House merely to admit them to the practice and profession of the law, to remove the remaining restrictions which interfered with their education, to repeal the Intermarriage Act, and abolish the limitations on the number of apprentices which they might take into their houses or places of business.

If this had been all, if these few concessions would have closed an angry controversy, the House would have been mad to hesitate at them. But they knew well that it was not all. Even Langrishe had spoken of a *sudden* transfer of power as if a transfer still lay ahead of them which should be effected gradually. Major Hobart did not relieve their anxieties. He seconded the motion, but did not speak upon it. Mr.

Cuffe, a Privy Councillor, expressed the general sentiment when he said that any indulgence granted now to the Catholics must be accompanied by an intimation to the Committee that Government would not be intimidated either by them or by their English agent. The Establishment in Church and State should be protected on the principles of the Revolution of 1688, and men of any or all religions who sought to disturb the peace of the country should be made to know that they would be punished.

A desultory conversation followed. Allusions were made to the good conduct of the Catholics during the American war. Presently up rose Mr. O'Hara, with Burke's petition in his hand.

The House, he said, seemed uncertain what the Catholics really desired. He was in a position to tell them from authority. He had been requested to lay before the House a statement which completely expressed their wishes and their expectations. It was not drawn by themselves. It was drawn by an individual a particular friend of his own, who was not himself a Catholic. Mr. O'Hara offered it for consideration, but begged he might not be understood to be its particular patron.

Charles Sheridan was observing that a paper not sanctioned by any public body, and written by a Protestant, was a curious authority for the views of the Catholics, when there was a rush at the doors, a noise, and agitated movement. Richard Burke, who had been listening in the gallery, and was unable to

endure to hear his performance ironically handled, plunged down into the body of the House and was about to speak. Amidst shouts of 'Custody' and cries for the Serjeant-at-Arms, the daring young gentleman retreated as fast as he entered. Disgust with his impertinence might easily have taken a serious form, when Toler, now Solicitor-General, rose and, with happy adroitness, said he feared the House could not accept the petition. It was a strange affair. He had never seen or heard the like of it, save in a cross-reading in a London newspaper. 'On such a day a most violent petition was presented to the House of Commons; it missed fire and the villain made off.' Amidst shouts of delighted laughter leave was given to bring in Langrishe's Bill. Richard Burke had helped the Government out of the mire, while he had ruined his own mission.<sup>1</sup> No one can survive in

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Burke is certainly the most unaccountable animal ever employed in any mission. It was a chance whether he produced unexampled mischief and ruined the Government. I am inclined to think his folly and madness have been beneficial to us. His imprudence has been beyond expression, and has given general offence. The stories about the petition are hardly credible. This composition was shown to Egan, Curran, and Grattan, who were inclined to support it, but they struck out some objectionable words. They must be pretty strong that this trio would

object to. Mr. Burke would not permit an iota to be altered. Of course these gentlemen declined to present it. Burke proposed sending a challenge to Egan for his refusal, upon pretence that he had promised. Mr. O'Hara was next pitched upon. He begged leave to read it, but Burke would not consent to that, and O'Hara agreed. Upon what passed in the House of Commons, Burke called a meeting of his committee, to verify their signatures before Mr. O'Hara. They wished to alter the objectionable parts of the petition. Burke would not consent. The Catholics

Ireland being made publicly ridiculous. The Catholic Committee gave him 2,000 guineas, sent him about his business, and resumed the management of their own affairs. The present Bill being now likely to be passed, as a complete settlement of the Catholic question, the revolutionary factions of both creeds were earnest to show that it would be no settlement at all, to frighten the House into rejecting it, and so to leave the sore open. Mr. O'Neil presented a petition from the Belfast Presbyterians for the complete removal of all Catholic disabilities. The Catholic Committee in Dublin drew a similar one of their own, which, with an evident slight to Burke, they entrusted to Egan. The Belfast petition was rejected on the motion of Mr. Latouche, the House refusing to receive it. They had consented against their own judgment to accept Langrishe's Bill, but 'the alarm being still universal that Government had ulterior views,' they desired to mark emphatically that they would go no further.<sup>1</sup> On whether the Catholic petition should be received there was a sharp debate, the supporters of the Catholic clauses insisting on being heard. Prominent among

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refused to acknowledge their signatures, and the Catholics and Burke parted with mutual criminations. We have heard no more of the petition; so whether it will be presented or not seems doubtful. I am in hopes this Republican and factious committee, a species of Parliament most excessively

dangerous, will now lose their consequence. An advantage already derived is the universal dislike to the levelling spirit, and the ruin of Napper Tandy and his associates.—Westmoreland to Dundas, January 28, 1792.' S.P.O.

<sup>1</sup> 'Westmoreland to Dundas, February 13.' S.P.O.

their champions was Colonel Hutchinson, the Provost's son,<sup>1</sup> who inherited his father's eloquence without his shrewdness. He talked the Liberal cant of the day, which may be compared instructively with the modern Papal syllabus. The sentiments of mankind on religion, he said, were altogether changed. The spirit of Romanism was softened, the influence of the Pope was feeble as the decrepit hand which wielded it. Catholics loved liberty as much as Protestants, and would cease to be bigots when the Protestants ceased to be persecutors.

In the same spirit George Ponsonby maintained that modern enlightenment had exploded the old superstitions. Mankind were now content with the great truths of the Gospel, unperplexed with the mystic jargon of school theology. Religious mysteries had fallen into the contempt which they deserved, and it would be the fault of the Legislature if by submitting to threadbare prejudice they allowed the public mind to be again disturbed by such 'despicable nonsense.'

Francis Hutchinson, the Provost's second son, soared into nationalist rhetoric. 'When the pride of Britain was humbled in the dust,' he said, 'her enemies led captive, the brightest jewel of the Imperial crown torn from her diadem, at the moment when the combined fleets of the two great Catholic powers of

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards General Lord Hutchinson, who succeeded Abercrombie in Egypt.

Europe threatened a descent upon our coasts, from whom did we derive our protection then?' Truth would have answered from Rodney and from Howe, who sent the combined fleets of France and Spain to the bottom of the sea. Ireland would have answered, ten years before, from her glorious Protestant Volunteers. Francis Hutchinson said, 'We found it in the support of three millions of our fellow-citizens, in the spirit of our national character, in the virtue of our Catholic brethren.'

The burning eloquence of the House was all on the side of emancipation, but it was based as usual upon illusion. There was no longer Fitzgibbon to show folly its proper figure. The defence of truth and common sense was left to less articulate advocates. General Cunningham said it was as plain as any proposition in Euclid that to give the franchise to Catholics implied a Catholic Parliament, and that a 'Catholic Parliament meant a revolution.' The Catholic Committee offered pledges on dangerous subjects. They renounced all claim to the forfeited estates. They promised that they would not meddle with the Protestant Establishment. Mr. Ogle, of Wexford, pointed out that such engagements would bind none but those who made them. The Catholics must become supreme in the State by mere weight of numbers, and when the power was in their hands it was idle to suppose that they would not use it in their own interest. 'The House had heard much,' said Mr. Pery, 'of the enlightened liberality of the time—'



what was it but a wild democratic spirit aiming at universal impossible equality? '1

The House rejected the Catholic petition by 208 voices to 23, so heavy was the preponderance of opinion against granting political power to a body whom the nature of things forbade to be other than their enemies. Langrishe's Bill was passed unwillingly to please the English Cabinet, but the friends of order in Ireland flattered themselves that they had heard now the last of concession, and Charles Sheridan gave a definition of Protestant ascendancy which was universally accepted, and which the immense majority of the members declared themselves determined to uphold. 'By Protestant ascendancy he meant a Protestant King, to whom only, being Protestant, they owed allegiance; a Protestant House of Peers, composed of Protestant Lords Spiritual in Protestant succession; of Protestant Lords Temporal with Protestant inheritance; and a Protestant House of Commons elected by Protestant constituents, a Protestant legislature

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1 'Sir Boyle Roche was the buffoon of the Conservative party. He amused the House with analysing the signatures to the Catholic petition. The first name was that of Mr. Edward Byrne, one of the largest merchants in Dublin, who paid 100,000*l.* a year to the revenue. Roche described him as "a sugar baker, seller of wine and other commodities." Keogh, the Committee's ambassador to Pitt,

he called "a retailer of poplins in Dame Street." In this not eminently wise spirit he went through the list, and inquired whether a meeting of turbulent shopkeepers and shoplifters, a repetition of the tarring and feathering committee of 1784, was to be taken as a representation of the Catholic nobility and gentry of Ireland.'—*Irish Debates*, February 1792.

a Protestant judiciary, a Protestant executive, in all and each of their varieties, degrees, and gradations.'

Three days after the Bill had been read the last time, the House of Commons itself, the building which had witnessed Grattan's triumph, and 'for <sup>1792</sup> beauty had been the admiration of Europe,' was burnt to the ground. The session in consequence came to a premature end, and closed in the middle of April. Before the curtain fell there was a mock-heroic passage at arms with the United Irishmen. Nappery Tandy, not liking the language in which the society and himself had been spoken of, sent Toler, the Solicitor-General, a challenge. The Irish laws of honour allowed a gentleman to refuse such invitations from a tradesman. Toler brought the letter before the House, and an officer was sent to arrest the offender and bring him to the bar for breach of privilege. Napper slipped through a window and escaped. The society was on its trial. To show the white feather would be fatal. Tone, who had been watching over its progress, himself keeping in the background, saw the moment come when he must act. He consulted Hamilton Rowan, a young hot-blooded associate who had become lately a member. They extemporised an irregular meeting. Rowan took the chair, with Tone for secretary. They passed a resolution that the House of Commons had treated them 'with insolence,' printed five thousand copies of it, which they sent flying through the country, with their names attached, and gave notice that if they were again interfered with they would challenge

the Speaker. In other countries such proceedings would have passed for idle bombast. In Ireland, Tone and Rowan became the heroes of the hour. As the session approached its end Napper, too, appeared to challenge martyrdom when it would be unattended with inconvenience. The authority of the House would determine with the prorogation. On the last day he was seen strutting through the streets towards College Green, intending to present himself to the House. He was encountered by the Serjeant-at-Arms, and was brought to the bar, Tone and Rowan sitting conspicuous in the uniform of the Whig Club in the front of the gallery. At the motion of the Attorney-General, Napper was committed to Newgate, to which he was escorted by an adoring crowd. His imprisonment lasted but an hour or two. On his release he commenced a prosecution against the Viceroy, by which Dublin was entertained and excited for the remainder of the year.

## SECTION VII.

So far the Catholic Committee had trusted to expectations held out by England, and had turned a deaf ear to the blandishments of Tone. Their petition had been flung back into their faces. Pitt, if still in their favour, was unwilling or unable to force his wishes on the Parliament. Further pressure was evidently necessary. Their difficulty hitherto had been from the secession of the moderates. The claim of the Committee to represent the Catholics of Ireland had been disallowed; they had been termed in contempt 'shopkeepers and shoplifters,' and Keogh and Byrne, the principal leaders, resolved on a bold stroke. The Volunteer Convention of '83 had failed because it was a body in arms and illegal. The Congress of '84 could not get itself chosen, for the High Sheriffs were afraid to hold the elections. If the Catholic bishops would assist, a Catholic Convention could be elected to which no valid objection could be made, and of the right of which to speak for the general body there could be no uncertainty. There would be difficulty. The Protestant gentry would do their utmost in opposition. The Bishops were timid, accustomed many of them to depend on the Castle, and unwilling to offend the leading Catholic nobility. It was unlikely that they could be brought to act without support from other quarters, and Keogh now boldly called in Wolfe

Tone, and with Tone the alliance with the United Lodges. Keogh himself was more or less serious in his religious belief. Tone and his friends were frank in their admissions that they believed nothing. The Catholic Committee were not particular. They desired to show the world that sooner than fail they would fling themselves on the Revolution. Wolfe Tone was appointed their special agent. Richard McCormick, a United Irishman also, became their secretary. The combination and the intentions of the Convention were no sooner formed than they were known at the Castle. Fitzgibbon, who alone was under no illusions, was for taking measures as prompt and decisive as those with which he had crushed the Congress in '84. If an independent representative assembly was allowed to meet and debate, he was confident that it would over-set the Parliament. It would be better to act at once, he said, when the Committee were weak, than to wait till they had collected money and had gained the confidence of the people. He proposed to issue a proclamation against unlawful assemblies, and to intimate privately to the principal Catholics that if they took part in elections they would be prosecuted. Neither the Chancellor nor Lord Westmoreland had any doubt of their power to check this new movement, if they could be sure of being backed by the Cabinet. Here was the real doubt. From some quarter, perhaps from Beaconsfield, Keogh had learnt that he had nothing to fear in that quarter. The object of the Convention was to petition the King in the name of the Catholics

of Ireland ; and the Committee asserted in a manifesto, with the use of the largest capitals, that 'they had the **FIRST AUTHORITY** for saying that the application would have infinite weight.'

Could it be true that, notwithstanding their disclaimer of Richard Burke, the Cabinet were still secretly encouraging Irish agitation unknown to the legitimate authority to whom they had delegated the Government? Major Hobart was in London. The Viceroy directed him to see Pitt and Dundas, and ascertain their real sentiments. Nothing could be more dangerous, nothing more fatal to the respect which in Ireland, beyond all countries in the world, the executive administration required to maintain, than the belief that some other body was the true representative of the opinion of the advisers of the Crown. 'If,' Westmoreland wrote, 'you can plainly ascertain from them that they will support the existing Establishment, if they will treat with decided coldness any ambassador or address from any other body, no mischief can happen. It is the suspicion of English toleration that causes the present bustle. I am as sensible as they can be that it is good policy that the Catholics should be attached to the English Government, but we must take care that in the flirtation we do not lose our power. If the dislike they manifest to Reform in England extends to Ireland, we may be confident of their support. No English Reform is so dangerous as this Catholic National Assembly. Endeavour to sift what steps Pitt thinks

we might venture. If the Assembly is *bond fide* elected and subsists, we must decide whether we will oppose or submit.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Pitt, like other sanguine statesmen before and since, had discovered that Ireland had been troublesome for want of 'Irish ideas' in the management of her. The Protestant gentry had made themselves a bye-word. The Protestant Parliament, in the debates on the Commercial Propositions and on the Regency, had behaved like an assembly of Bedlamites. The Belfast Whig Club was in open sympathy with the Jacobins. In the well-disposed, loyal, and pious Catholics he was hoping to find a Conservative element to cool the revolutionary fever. He would have been less confident of his own judgment could he have seen the party who, under Keogh's auspices, were preparing for a summer campaign to agitate for the Assembly of the Catholic Convention. They appear in Tone's Diary, half-a-dozen of them in all, and each passing by a nickname. Tone himself passed modestly under the sobriquet of Mr. Hutton; Keogh, the moving spirit, was Gog; McCormick, the Committee's secretary, was Magog; Whitley Stokes, the Dean of Trinity, was the Keeper; Napper Tandy was the Tribune; 'the Hypocrite' was Dr. MacDonnell, a distinguished Dissenting leader in Ulster.

The first object being to secure the thorough

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Westmoreland to Major Hobart, June 7, 1792. S.P.O.

support of the Presbyterians, Belfast was chosen for the opening of the operations, where the ground was already prepared. The Belfast petition for the removal of the Catholic disabilities having been rejected by Parliament, the Republicans had replied by a demonstration. On the 19th of April there had been a United dinner there of Catholics and Protestants, where the toasts had been 'Tom Paine and the Rights of Man,' 'Napper Tandy and the Rights of the Subject,' 'Wolfe Tone and Reform of Parliament,' while the Catholic parish priest had proposed 'Religion without Priestcraft.'<sup>1</sup> On the 14th of July there was to be a second revolutionary celebration, and the occasion was taken for Keogh and his friends to appear on the scene.

Let the reader, then, start from Dublin on the 9th, with Wolfe Tone and Whitley Stokes, and with Tone's journal to tell the story. Keogh was himself in Munster, but was coming up to join them.

'July 9.—Set out with the Keeper. Breakfast at the Man of War. Stokes dull. Proposed picquet. Doubt the Keeper is a blackleg.

'July 10.—Sup with Neilson and the old set. Bed at one o'clock.

'July 11.—Rise with headache.

'July 13.—The Hypocrite made the Keeper drunk last night. Here the Tribune is arrived, and say Oh! to him. The hair of Dr. Haliday's wig grows grey

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Belfast, April 19, 1792.*



from fear of the Catholics. Several comets appear in the market-place. Good news from Munster. Gog preaching for three days to six bishops, who are at last converted. *Ca ira*. The Keeper dines this day in the country with the Hypocrite. Suppose he will make a beast of himself again.

'July 14.—Anniversary of the taking of the Bastille. Procession of Volunteers, seven hundred strong. Meeting at the Linen Hall; like the old German meetings in the woods, the people sitting, the armed warriors in a ring standing round. The effect of the unanimous Aye of the assembly when passing the address.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hutton<sup>2</sup> so affected that tears stood in his eyes. Sentimental and pretty. More and more satisfied that moderation is stuff and nonsense. Business settled at Belfast. Huzza! Dinner at the Donegal Arms. Everybody as happy as a king. God bless everybody, Stanislaus Augustus, George Washington. Who would have thought it this morning? Generally drunk. Home, God knows how and when. God bless everybody again generally. Bed, with three times three.

'July 16.—Breakfast at the Grove with Simms.<sup>3</sup> All the Catholics from Dublin there. Council of war in the garden. Gog explains the plan of organizing the Catholic body. If the Dissenting interest were with us, all would be done. Simms says the thinking men

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<sup>1</sup> For Catholic Emancipation.

<sup>2</sup> Tone himself.

<sup>3</sup> Another Presbyterian leader.

are with us ; but if Government attacks the Catholic Committee under the new system. in two months the North will not be ready to support them. Dinner. MacTier in the chair. At the head of the table a Dissenter and a Catholic. Delightful. The four flags—America, France, Poland, Ireland, but no England. Bravo! Huzza! Three times three. God bless everybody. Go upstairs with a Catholic.

' July 18.—Leave Belfast. Set off with the Catholics on the way to Dublin. Gog converts a Bishop at Newry, another at Downpatrick. Gog insufferably vain, fishing for compliments, of which Mr. Hutton is sparing. Gog then praises Mr. Hutton, who relents, and lays it on in return pretty thick. Nothing too gross. A great deal of wine. Bed between one and two. Bad! Bad! Bad!

' July 21.<sup>1</sup> Rode out with Gog to Grattan. Entertained all the way with stories of Burke, who is become odious to Gog. Burke scheming with the Catholics here to raise his value in England with the Ministers. A puppy or worse! We arrive at Grattan's. Tell him of the state of the North and South. He approves. Talk of next winter. If the Committee are firm Mr. Grattan thinks the House will submit. Say "Oh!" to him and depart.

' July 22.—Gog expects Burke at Cork,<sup>2</sup> who pre-

<sup>1</sup> Again at Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dundas took credit with Westmoreland for having received Burke with great coolness on his return to England. He was coming

back to Ireland, however, still insisting that he was in the confidence of the Cabinet.—Major Hobart to Evan Nepean, October 4.' S.P.O.

tends to have come over on his own private affairs. Private fiddlesticks! Gog in a rage. Determined to thwart him and put him down with the Catholics. Burke is by far the most impudent, opiniative fellow that I ever knew. Gog wants a round-robin not to invite them to their houses. Does he want another 2,000 guineas? Mad as his father about the French Revolution.

'August 1.—The vintner<sup>1</sup> hangs back. Old cowardly slave! The Catholic spirit quite broken. *They do not even beat one another!* Sad. Sad. Busy all day folding papers for the Munster Bishops. Damn all Bishops. Gog not quite right on that point. Thinks them a good thing. Nonsense! Dine at home with Neilson and McCracken. Very pleasant. Rights of man. French Revolution. No Bishops, &c.

'August 2.—Gog not equal in steadiness to Magog,<sup>2</sup> and as vain as the devil. Magog not a grain of a papist.

'August 14.—Walk out and see McCracken's new ship the "Hibernia." "Hibernia" has an English crown on her shield. We all roar at him. Dine with Neilson. Generally drunk. Vive la Nation! Damn the Emperor of Russia. Generally very drunk. Bed, God knows how. Huzza! Huz . . . .

'August 15.—Wake drunk.

'August 16.—Damn the Aristocrats! Mug a

<sup>1</sup> Edward Byrne, the great spirit-merchant, and first Catholic in Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> McCormick, secretary to the Catholic Committee.

quantity of mulled wine. Generally drunk. Union of Irishmen, with three times three.

'August 17.—Rise as sick as a dog. Breakfast with Lord Moira, and ask leave to introduce Gog, which he grants with much civility.'<sup>1</sup>

Wolfe Tone's chronicle does not want in honesty. The effect of his and companions' exertions was, that after some hesitation the election of delegates went forward. The Government threatened the Catholic Bishops. The gentry talked of reviving the Volunteers to counteract the Catholic combinations.<sup>2</sup> The Burkes protested against the alliance with the revolutionists. Edmund Burke wrote affectionate letters to Keogh, and invited his sons to stay with him at Beaconsfield. Richard tried once more the effect of his own presence. But they only created ridicule and coarse suspicion.<sup>3</sup> The Irish prelates cast in

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from the Journal of Wolfe Tone, summer and autumn of 1792.

<sup>2</sup> 'Westmoreland to Dundas, August 13.'

<sup>3</sup> 'September 5. Burke is come, Gog says as a spy for Dundas. His impudence is beyond all I have ever known. Edmund Burke has Gog's boys on a visit, and has written him a letter in their praise. He wants to enlist Gog in behalf of his son, but it won't do. Gog sees it clear enough—wants two thousand more guineas for his son, if he can. Edmund is no fool in money matters. Is this "Sublime

or Beautiful"?' Gog has given Burke his *congé*. Burke mad as the devil, but cannot help himself.—*Tone's Journal*, September 1792.

'In the State Paper Office there is a letter on the subject of Burke from Keogh to Doctor Hussey, a prominent Catholic priest, who was in the confidence of the Cabinet. It was to warn Dundas against regarding Burke as in any degree authorised to speak for the Catholics of Ireland, and to complain of the confusion which he had caused. This letter, being among the Secret Irish Papers, was evidently for-

their lot with the Committee, either in earnest or as a menace to the Government, and Catholic representatives were chosen for every county, to meet in Dublin on the 3rd of the approaching December.

As the prospects of the Protestant revolutionists ten years before turned on the fate of the American war, so now the prospects of their Catholic heirs and successors hinged on the future of France. The Jacobin fury was displaying itself in its terror. The September massacre was filling England and Protestant Ireland with indignation and horror. The Duke of Brunswick was advancing, and if he reached Paris Tone's labour would have been thrown away. All would be over with the Committee and the United Irishmen. Two of the new delegates, one of them a priest, was found in correspondence with Condorcet. The Government intercepted the letters and recommended them to the better thoughts of Dundas.<sup>1</sup> Relieved of fear on the side of France, Pitt would trouble himself little about Irish agitation; and Tone was so well aware of the fighting value of the noisy patriots, who talked sedition with so much fluency, that at one moment he and his companions, in their sober intervals, were again contemplating emigration. If Lord Moira would put himself at the head of a rebellion, which he appeared to think not wholly impossible, there might still be

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warded by Doctor Hussey to Dundas.'—*Irish MSS.*, October 2, 1792.

<sup>1</sup> 'Major Hobart to Evan Nepean, October 20. Secret.' S.P.O.

hope.<sup>1</sup> If not, Tone knew a sergeant's guard would keep the peace of Ireland for all the fight that was in the mobs of Dublin and Belfast.<sup>2</sup> But the fates were merciful. In October came the news of Valmy. The Duke of Brunswick was hurled back, the Revolution was triumphant, and aspiring Ireland breathed again.<sup>3</sup> The Bishop of Killala, a little startled at the tone of things, suggested that he and his brother prelates might as well have more influence in the Committee. 'Damned kind,' was Tone's remark. 'Gog revolts like a fury, and tells Mr. Hutton he begins to see the Catholic Bishops are all scoundrels.' On the 1st of November the Catholic parts of Dublin were illuminated for Dumouriez's victory. 'Singular,' observed Major Hobart, 'that the same event should have produced mourning in Beaconsfield and illumination in Dublin; but in proportion as Popery declines in France Mr. Burke is determined to make it flourish

<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Moira may, if he chooses, be one of the greatest men in Europe.'—*Journal*, September 18.

<sup>2</sup> 'September 11.—Ride with Warren. Wet to the skin. Propose a general emigration to America, if our schemes fail. Whitley Stokes to be principal of a college to be founded. We get drunk, talking of our plans. God bless everybody.

'September 17.—The devil to pay in Paris. Mob broke open the prisons, and massacred the pri-

soners. An Irish mob would have plundered, but shed no blood. Which is best? I lean to the Frenchmen—more manly. Our mob very shabby fellows. Never would have stood as the Parisians did on August 10. A sergeant's guard would drive the mob of Dublin.'—*Journal*, September, 1792.

<sup>3</sup> 'October 11.—Dumouriez's victory. Huza! If the French had been beaten it was all over with us. All safe for this campaign.'

in Ireland.'<sup>1</sup> Tone, Hamilton Rowan, McCormick, and the rest of the United leaders had a dinner on the same occasion. The chief talk was of 'tactics of treason.' Tone was surprised to see two glasses before him, and that Hamilton Rowan had four eyes. He was himself, 'like the sun in the centre of the system, perfectly sober when all else were drunk;' but 'when he attempted to walk across the room he was unable to move rectilineally, from his having eaten a sprig of watercresses.'

There needed still but a firm word from England for faction to slink into its den, but the word was not spoken, and the impression prevailed, which Dundas's private letter certainly justified, that Pitt intended to leave Irish Protestantism to its fate.<sup>2</sup> A revolution was now openly talked of, and Tone was applied to for protection when the rebellion should break out.<sup>3</sup> The signal was to be the meeting of the Convention, and the patriots prepared for action. Arms were imported. Rowan and Tandy, under cover of the lingering respect for the Volunteers, raised two battalions of a National Guard, each a thousand strong,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Major Hobart to Evan Nepean, November 1, 1792.' S.P.O.

Major Hobart to Evan Nepean, November 1.'

<sup>2</sup> 'I am persuaded that a steady and declared intention on the part of the British Ministry to support the Irish Government against violence will prevent mischief here; but, however strange it may appear to say so, it must be declared.—

<sup>3</sup> Tone says that Plunket asked him for Carton when the land should be re-distributed. He replied that Plunket could not have Carton, because the Duke of Leinster was his friend, but that he might have Curraghmore.

with green uniform, harp buttons, and in the place of the crown a cap of liberty. Mr. Jackson, an iron-monger, gave them the use of his forge to cast cannon.<sup>1</sup> The Whiteboys in the provinces, or Defenders, as they were now generally called, made haste in the winter nights to disarm the Protestants.<sup>2</sup> Donegal was in the hands of a mob of incendiaries. In Meath a bold attempt was made to carry off a battery of field artillery. Under these conditions the Convention was about to assemble.

Major Hobart had brought back injunctions from Dundas that the elections were not to be interfered with. The gentry did not mean to part with their property without a struggle, and on their side were arming also. Three weeks before the meeting Lord Westmoreland made another effort to open Pitt's eyes, or at least to obtain from him some definite directions.

'However opposed to these measures,' he wrote, 'the threats of the democratic leaders have forced the clergy into co-operation and the gentry into acquiescence. The elective franchise is accepted by them all. They mean to press it as a prelude to the abolition of all distinctions. The attainment of the franchise they consider decisive of their future power in the State. They have coalesced with the United Irishmen and with every turbulent spirit in the country. . . . The Com-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Westmoreland to Dundas, | a hundred and eighty houses of  
December 5.' S.P.O. | Protestants were entered and plun-

<sup>2</sup> In Louth alone, in this year, | dered of arms.



mittee already exercise the functions of Government, levy contributions, issue orders for the preservation of the peace—a circumstance perhaps more dangerous than if they could direct the breach of it. Their mandates are taken by the lower class of people as laws. Their communications are rapid, and are carried on, not by the post, but by secret channels and agents. The lower Catholics connect the franchise with the non-payment of rents, tithe, and taxes.

‘As universal as is the Catholic demand for it, so is the determination of the Protestants to resist the claim. There is no risk they will not run rather than submit to it! In Down a thousand Protestants are in arms, to preserve the peace, and their object is to keep the Catholics down. They are arming in Monaghan on the same principle, and Volunteering will become general if Government will not act. I have consulted the Chancellor and the other confidential friends of Government. All are unanimous not to yield anything at present, and all agree that the British Government must speak out plainly, to quiet the suspicions of the Protestants. I asked if they were prepared for the consequences of their language, and what means they could employ for resistance. On this head I found in no one the smallest apprehension, provided Government spoke with firmness. They apprehend no immediate convulsion, nor any convulsion, if Great Britain is firm.

‘If the hour is not come it may not be distant when you must decide whether you will incline to

the Protestants or the Catholics; and if such necessity should arise it cannot be doubted for a moment you must take part with the Protestants. If the Protestants, after being forced into submission, should, contrary to their expectations, find themselves secure of their possessions without British protection, they will run into the present State-making mania abroad in the world. You must expect resentment from the Protestants, and gratitude from the Catholics is not to be relied on. Concession of the franchise will make no difference in the conduct of the Catholics, nor will the question come before you in that shape. The question will be, whether England will permit the existing Government to be forced in Ireland. Suppose the Ministry to propose a relaxation of the Popery laws, and be defeated in Parliament. If the Catholics resort to violence the force of the empire must necessarily be exerted in support of Parliament.'<sup>1</sup>

The reply of the Cabinet to this important letter was to inform Westmoreland curtly that 'England required all the force she possessed at home to protect herself from her foreign and domestic enemies.' 'He must therefore act on his own responsibility.' The 'comfortless communication' was unattended with so much as a hint of what the Ministers really desired, or why 'the Viceroy was left so completely independent.' To leave him thus, however, was perhaps better than to have hampered him with

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Earl of Westmoreland to Dundas, November 17, 1792. Secret.' S.P.O.

ambiguous utterances. Flung on his own resources, Lord Westmoreland turned to the Chancellor, who knew better than Pitt what Dublin sedition was made of. The danger was for the Convention to meet, and to find an armed force at its disposition. The National Guard was rapidly organizing; other battalions were expected from Belfast, and notice had been given of a review which was to be held on the 9th of December.<sup>1</sup> Fitzgibbon issued a proclamation against unauthorised bodies assembling in arms. The National Guards would meet at their peril. It was an anxious moment. Rowan, Keogh, and Tandy roared their loudest; hired bands of vagabonds roamed about the streets at night, crying 'Liberty, Equality, and no King!' 'What they are to attempt,' Major Hobart wrote to the Ministers on the 5th, 'when the Mar-seillais arrive from Belfast a short time must develop. You have more at stake in Ireland than you are aware of. You think it is a mere question between Catholic and Protestant. I wish it was. It is of deeper concern to us all, and goes to the complete overturning of the Constitution.'

The result proved how well Fitzgibbon knew his countrymen. When the day came for the force to show itself which was to overthrow the Constitution there appeared on the parade ground Napper Tandy,

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<sup>1</sup> Belfast was going fast and far. There, too, there was an illumination for Valmy. One of the transparencies was a gallows with an inverted crown, and the words, 'May the fate of all tyrants be that of Capet.'

Hamilton Rowan, and Carey the printer. These three were present in their green uniforms, their buttons, and their cap of liberty, and no more.

The National Guards, like Falstaff, showed their valour in its better part. The Convention, having its teeth drawn, was then allowed to meet without interference. That such an assembly should exist at all was a menace to the peace of the country. The ambiguous language of the Cabinet forbade the Castle to proceed to a direct inhibition of it. The easy suppression of the National Guards taught the delegates that the time was not come to carry the Constitution by escalade.

Thus the Back Lane Parliament, as the new body was called, came together; the first Catholic elective assembly which had existed in Ireland since the Parliament of King James. The occasion was celebrated with the usual high-flown language. Edward Byrne took the chair, 'the spirit of liberty running like an electric fire through every link of the Catholic chain.' The immediate business was to prepare a petition to the Crown, or rather to revise and sanction it, for the petition itself had been already composed by Tone. It was a document like all which came from the same hand, with the same gaudy diction and the same regardlessness of truth. It professed the most burning loyalty. It asked for the franchise on the ground that the Catholics had merited confidence, and that confidence would make their attachment to the throne more secure; while Tone's own admitted object was separation

from England, and his central conviction was that every Catholic in his heart hated England.<sup>1</sup>

Such as it was, the Catholic representatives adopted it as their own. It was signed by Dr. Troy the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and by Dr. Moylan the Bishop of Cork, on behalf of the Catholic prelates and clergy of Ireland. The delegates signed for themselves and the laity. The Catholic community had now unmistakably declared their wishes, and the immediate business was concluded. Five of the body were selected to lay the petition before the throne—Edward

1793 Byrne himself, Keogh, Christopher Bellew, John Devereux, and Sir Thomas French. The thanks of the Convention were given to Tone for his services, and they then separated, with the significant resolution that 'they would meet again when summoned, if it was on the other side of the Atlantic.'

The five gentlemen set off for England, taking Tone along with them. To give *éclat* to their mission, they went by Belfast, where the people took their horses from the carriage and drew them through the streets to the quay where they embarked. In London they were received by Lord Moira, who entertained them in his house, and promised that if the Ministers refused to present them to the King, he would claim his privilege as a peer and introduce them himself. Hobart wrote an ineffectual warning, especially against

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<sup>1</sup> 'Petition of the Catholic Convention.'—*Plowden*, vol. iv. Appendix, 95.

Keogh, who, he said truly, was connected with the worst men and the worst intentions in the country, but 'so plausible and subtle that there was danger in communicating with him.' The Cabinet had, unfortunately, made up their minds, in the face of proof to the contrary, that Catholics could not be revolutionists; that they were rather the necessary and natural enemies of revolution; and that the delegates therefore ought to be received. Dundas presented them; they delivered their petition, and it was graciously accepted. They informed Dundas afterwards, in a private interview, that the peace of Ireland depended on concession, and Dundas believed them. They assured him that although their actual demand stopped at the franchise, yet that nothing would really satisfy them short of total emancipation. He did not discourage them. He told them that their present claims should be recommended to Parliament from the throne; that he looked to them in return, to support order and authority; and they left him with the belief that the Cabinet contemplated the entire abolition of all religious distinctions at no distant period.

'Our opinions are not altered,' Lord Westmoreland wrote, when the news of this extraordinary performance reached him. 'The Chancellor, the Speaker, and the Archbishop of Cashel still consider it most unwise. The alarm at concession is aggravated by the principle on which it is made. You expect it will give quiet here. It will not, unless you say emphatically that the Irish Parliament, having made this concession, will then

receive the cordial support of the British Government. The recommendation from the throne appears as originating from the petition of the Catholic Convention. At this moment a daring insurrection prevails among the lower Catholics in neighbouring counties for the purpose of disarming the Protestants. This is part of the intimidatory system of the Catholic Committee. How is it to end? If year by year it is to be the same story, gentlemen will prefer the hazard of resistance now to strengthening those with whom they must hereafter contend.’<sup>1</sup>

‘Intimidation,’ said Hobart, ‘is too glaring on the face of the whole proceeding. Instead of satisfying the Catholics, the public tranquillity will be in greater danger from the concessions than if none were made. Every man of talent we have considers himself sacrificed for England’s convenience. Be assured, unless England speedily interposes energetically with regard to Ireland, we shall have a commotion of a very serious nature. I see plainly it will not be understood till it is too late. They are now setting up the King against the Government, to undermine the Constitution. It is precisely the French system, and will produce the same consequences. Believe no one that would persuade you that Keogh’s party—and it leads the Catholics—are not Republicans.’<sup>2</sup>

Westmoreland and Hobart formed their opinions from knowledge of Ireland. Dundas and Pitt formed

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The Earl of Westmoreland to Dundas, January 9, 1793.’ S.P.O. | <sup>2</sup> ‘Major Hobart to Evan Nepean, January 9 and 19, 1793.’

theirs from knowledge of human nature generally, which they conceived that they could apply to Ireland; they stood sulkily to their purpose, and intimated plainly that the concession of the franchise was not to be the last. 'We are perfectly ready,' Dundas replied to their letter, 'to declare our determination to support the Protestant Establishment of Ireland, and maintain its form of government; but, unfortunately, we and his Majesty's servants in Ireland differ essentially as to the best mode of securing those objects. We consider the Catholics less likely to concur in disturbing the existing order of things when they participate in the franchise, than if totally excluded from those benefits which must be most dear to men living in a country where the power of an Independent Parliament has been recognised. Had the franchise been granted a year ago it would have been enough; now it will probably not be enough. We recommend to your Excellency and your Irish advisers a candid consideration of the whole subject, and the danger of leaving behind a sore part of the question.'<sup>1</sup>

Political disaffection was to be conciliated by concession of power; internal anarchy was to be healed by a homœopathic remedy of a similar kind. Meanwhile the plunder of arms and the attacks of the peasantry on the houses of the Protestants in Meath and King's County had become so systematic and so daring, that the gentry had associated for self-defence.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Dundas to the Earl of Westmoreland. January 23, 1793.' Abridged.



Fifty gentlemen were attacked one night in the beginning of January by six hundred Irish. The Catholic peasantry were not caitiffs like the Dublin mob. They fought desperately; and though beaten off at last, held their ground till six-and-thirty of them were left dead on the field.<sup>1</sup>

The comment of the Cabinet was to insist on the impropriety of continuing an unnecessary and impolitic disqualification. Since the Catholics had such a passion for possessing arms, they considered it would be wiser to place them at once on a level with other citizens and allow them to purchase arms.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MSS. *Ireland*, January, 1793. S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dundas to the Earl of Westmoreland, January 23, 1793.'

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FITZWILLIAM CRISIS.

#### SECTION I.

**D**UNDAS had alleged the recovered independence of the Irish Parliament as the explanation of the anxiety of the Catholics to obtain admission to it. The veiled sarcasm perhaps explains the motives which were working in the mind of Mr. Pitt. He was told from Dublin Castle that he had only to be firm for order to be restored. But had order in Ireland, as understood by the Protestant gentry, been so very beautiful a thing? Was the power of England to be exerted to maintain rack-rents and absenteeism?—to maintain a Parliament which could be held to its duties only by systematised corruption? England was again on the eve of a desperate war. The Protestant Parliament of Ireland had taken advantage of her embarrassment, in her last great struggle, to extort the Constitution of '82. Nine years had already passed since a Volunteer Convention, composed exclusively of gentry of the Established Church, and headed by a bishop, had made an armed demonstration of rebellion. Annual motions

directly hostile to England had been brought forward by revolutionary patriots, and had been defeated only by lavish bribery. Protestant Belfast had declared itself a disciple of Tom Paine, and the National Assembly at Paris was offering muskets and cannon to all oppressed nations who desired to assert their liberties. What security had Pitt that, after some French success, the principles of the United Irishmen would not be adopted by Grattan and the Protestant Parliament?—that a reform equivalent to a revolution would not be insisted on as the alternative of separation, the Protestant gentry placing themselves at the head of the Irish nation, like the Geraldines in the sixteenth century? The conduct of the Irish Parliament on the Regency question was a recent proof that no dependence could be placed on them. The Cabinet was confronted with an immediate practical problem. The agitation of Reform among the Protestants had encouraged the Catholics to demand the suffrage. To refuse their petition was to throw them at once upon the Revolution, and give to the French three million ardent allies in Ireland; while at any moment, in some wild dream of liberty, the Protestant Nationalist leaders might carry Parliament along with them, as they had done before, take up themselves the Catholic cause as against England, and become the champions of Irish independence.

It is unlikely that either Pitt or Dundas contemplated allowing Ireland to fall really under a Catholic Parliamentary majority. Under the present Constitu-

tion some years would elapse before even complete emancipation would obtain admission for them in formidable numbers. Already Pitt was looking to a union as the only effectual remedy. To propose a union to a body of men who had received as an insult the suggestion that they should contribute to the Imperial navy, would have been to open the bags of Æolus. They might be more reasonable if the Catholics were admitted amongst them, and their ascendancy and their estates in danger. The workings of Pitt's mind on the Irish subject, obscure even to Grattan after close and confidential conversation with him, became partly visible in a letter written in December 1792, by Lord Westmoreland to Dundas, before the arrival of the Catholic delegates in London.

After a few words on the desirableness of granting a peerage to Mr. O'Neil, to detach him from the levellers, the Viceroy continues :—

‘The situation has very much changed within the last month, but miraculously almost in the last fortnight. The Protestants and people of property, from an idea that England was indifferent about the Catholic question, and therefore about the fate of the Establishment and property, have fallen into a most miserable state of despondency, which has worked a spirit of conciliation to the Catholics, on the principle of attaching the Catholics to the Constitution, to save it from the levellers. I don't yet find either the panic or the conciliatory inclination much gone to the country ; and as it certainly is panic and not favourable dis-

position, upon any appearance of strength the resisting determination will probably return, even in this town. . . . Nor, if we should find it expedient to advocate conciliatory measures, am I prepared to say they could be carried, or that if they were carried against the opinion of the privileged classes, that the English Government would not be ruined by the concession ; that all the politicians would not either, from resentment or policy, look to popularity in Ireland ; and that, by a junction of factions, every unpleasant Irish question of trade, particularly the Indian one, and every popular scheme to fetter English Government, would not be pressed in an inevitable manner. The conduct of the Catholics renders concession dangerous, for if given in the moment of intimidation, who can answer for the limit that may give content ? And if Keogh should persuade the Catholics that the concessions were owing to the Convention, the influence of Keogh and a few other dangerous men will be increased to such a degree, that all the Catholics will follow them.

‘ Don’t suppose from what I say that concession can be carried if it is thought advisable. I only wish to acquaint you with the state of opinion here. The Chancellor, the Speaker, Beresford, and Parnell continue unvaried in the sentiments they have before expressed. The most desirable point is to get rid of the Catholic Republican Government, in the name of the Committee or the Convention, and I am at a loss how to effect it. Concession could only give it additional influence, if concession was supposed to be

worked through them. . . . If the Protestants are alienated, the connection between the countries, in my opinion, is at an end. If concession is found advisable, and we can manage the business in a manner not to alienate the Protestants, it will not be so dangerous, though it will certainly be hazardous; and at least every step of conciliating the two descriptions of people that inhabit Ireland *diminishes the probability of that object to be wished—a union with England.* Before the present panic it was a good deal in the thoughts of people as preferable to being overwhelmed by the Catholics, as the Protestants termed concession, or continuing slaves, in the Catholic phrase. That conversation, since the Protestants have been persuaded that England could not or would not help them, has subsided.

‘In the meantime the levellers have burst forth with a degree of impertinence and noise most astonishing. They are guided by a sect called the United Irishmen. They have money. I cannot conceive where it comes from. They have appeared in every sort of sedition. The soldiers are attempted in the alehouses. The playhouses and amphitheatre are every night attacked with *Ça ira*. They have publicly professed a determination of raising several thousand men in a national battalion, with French mottoes, for the reformation of Parliament. Their end is, destroying English influence in this country. The great Catholic body is not connected with these people, but the leaders of the Dublin Committee are; and Keogh, who is the present mover of the Catholics, is a member

of this society, and has been particularly active in endeavouring to form this national battalion.

‘The great danger is from the North, where the Volunteering spirit has gained ground from dislike of the Catholics; and if that dislike should be done away, or resentment for concession actuated them, their Republican principles may lead them to any possible mischief. . . . The minds of men are in a great ferment, the mob expecting to be relieved from tithes, rents, and taxes by relief from Catholic laws; the Protestants alarmed and offended, and the levellers elated with the success of France.

‘I believe a Big word from England of her determination to support the Protestant Establishment would set everything quiet, but England must convince the Protestants that she thinks the connexion of importance. Every species of mischief is in agitation. They have assassin clubs—marked individuals—in short, the whole systematic Jacobin plan. My great object is to strengthen ourselves as much as possible before the Parliament. . . . If concession should seem to you proper, let me entreat you not to be hasty, but leave it to me. Be assured you shall have early knowledge what can or cannot be done, and do not let out your mind in any way to these delegates.’<sup>1</sup>

The language in which Westmoreland speaks in this letter of the Union seems to show that it was already the object at which the Cabinet was aiming.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The Earl of Westmoreland to Dundas, December 12, 1792.’

If the object most to be feared was the drawing together of the Catholics and Protestants, the readiest way for England to prevent it was to force emancipation upon the present Parliament, and to make the Catholics feel that they owed their relief to the English Ministers. The Union might then be accomplished in time to prevent serious mischief. This interpretation renders conduct explicable which otherwise might have appeared delirious. The Big word was not spoken. The Cabinet did precisely what Westmoreland begged that they would not do: they explained their intentions to the delegates in complete openness, as if the object was to divide the Castle Government from the Irish to teach the Catholics that England was their friend, and to raise, in doing so, deliberately the bitter animosity which the Protestant gentry were certain to feel.

Never did Viceroy encounter Parliament with a more stormy outlook, or under harder conditions as concerned himself, than the Earl of Westmoreland, when on the 10th of January he opened the session of 1793. The speech recommended the situation of the Catholics to the serious attention, the wisdom, and the liberality of the Legislature. The words implied as every one understood that the Irish Parliament was required to make a concession, to which in the preceding year the House of Commons had declared, by an overpowering majority, that they would never consent. The address was moved by Lord Tyrone. The seconder was the younger son of Lord Mornington, Major



Arthur Wellesley, who, on this occasion, made his first plunge into public life. His speech was brief but characteristic. He expressed no doubts of the loyalty of the Catholics. He advised the House to approach the subject with moderation and dignity; but he stepped out of his way to applaud Westmoreland for his firmness 'in preventing men calling themselves National Guards from appearing in military array.' Grattan as usual moved an amendment, separating the Castle from the King, and giving the latter the credit of the intended measure. Tom Conolly declared that he approved of every part of the address save of the paragraph which thanked the King for continuing the Earl of Westmoreland in the Government. When the address to the Crown was carried, there followed the address to the Viceroy. It was the signal for the outpouring of patriotic indignation, which was hardly appeased by Dennis Browne, who, though he usually voted with the Patriots, declared now that he had heard of no act of the Viceroy injurious to the liberties of his country, and that a Government deserved support under which public and private credit, trade, and revenue were all thriving.

This address too was passed. Then followed notices of motions. William Ponsonby announced that he intended to introduce a Reform Bill. Grattan moved for a Committee to inquire into the abuses of the Constitution. George Ponsonby guessing plainly the aim of England in promoting emancipation, and

believing that he could still baffle Pitt if the Irish Constitution could first be popularised, supported Grattan and his brother, insisting that Ireland should no longer be the plaything of English Ministers. The rule of the session was to be conciliation wherever conciliation was possible. Mr. Corry for the Government consented to the appointment of a Committee, to inquire, not into 'the abuses' which presumed the conclusion, but into 'the state' of the representation, which might admit alteration. Grattan agreed to the change, though without pledging himself that the subject of abuses should not be revived. Still more significant was the attitude of Government on Mr. Forbes' annual motion to exclude holders of pensions and State appointments from Parliament. The Cabinet no longer objected to the introduction of the Bill, and in consenting to an abrogation of the time-honoured method by which public business had been so long carried on, appeared to admit that the Irish Parliament could not continue on its present footing.

The Government on the other hand called on the Legislature to sanction measures already begun for the repression of anarchy. On the 31st of January the House was invited to thank the Viceroy for having prohibited the parade of the National Guards. George Ponsonby gave a grudging assent. Grattan did not oppose, but warned the Secretary against making the extravagance of the Republicans a plea for touching those sacred guardians of liberty, the Volunteers. One voice only was raised in definite protest. Lord Edward

Fitzgerald, whose light nature boiled at a lower temperature than that of ordinary Whigs in the disaffected atmosphere of Leinster House, had been swept into the revolutionary ferment. He had been at Paris with the Anglo-Irish deputation which had congratulated the National Assembly on the events of the 10th of August. The abolition of hereditary distinctions had been drunk as a toast at a republican dinner; and Lord Edward, amidst enthusiastic cheers, had declared that he renounced his title. Thus Citizen Fitzgerald in his place in the House of Commons rose and said:—

‘I give my most hearty disapprobation of the address of thanks, for I think that the Lord-Lieutenant and the majority of this House are the worst subjects the King has.’

Cries of ‘To the bar!’ ‘To the bar!’ ‘Take down his words,’ brought an explanation which was rejected as insufficient. The next day the young lord apologised, and, after a debate of two hours and a division, the apology was allowed.

Preliminary movements over, the great questions of the session now approached. In the first week Major Hobart had given notice that he would introduce a Bill for the removal of the Catholic disabilities. Was the removal to be complete or partial? and if partial, was the Catholic body prepared to accept it? On this point the leading members of the Catholic Committee had been at issue with their allies. Wolfe Tone had been for rejecting everything short of total

emancipation, desiring to keep the wound open to feed the spirit of disaffection. Dr. Troy and the bishops were willing to meet the Government half way, to take gratefully as much as should be offered, and to wait till opinion had ripened for the full concession of equality. The 'Convention before it separated refused to receive a deputation from the United Irishmen for fear of compromising itself too deeply.'<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Rowan published a fierce address to the Volunteers, inviting them to resume their arms, calling on the Irish soldiers in the army to remember that they were citizens, and that their first duty was to their country, demanding complete and instant emancipation, and inviting another meeting at Duggannon to compel it.<sup>2</sup> Keogh had talked bravely to Tone of his hopes that the Cabinet would refuse to receive their petition in order 'to rouse the people.' Major Hobart's measures, it was now understood, extended only to the franchise. The delegates when they went to London had expected no more. Their reception and Dundas's language to them had raised their aspirations; and as soon as Hobart had given notice of his Bill, and the limitations of it were known, four of the five were deputed by the Catholic Committee to tell him that they had been promised seats in Parliament, and that they must have them.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Keogh begged Hamilton Rowan not to press this, as now it might create divisions among them. —Westmoreland to Dundas, December 12.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> *Publications of the United Irishmen*, December 14, 1792.

Hobart answered peremptorily that they must take what he was ready to give or they would have nothing. They were cowed and faintly acquiesced.<sup>1</sup> The part of the Committee which was under Tone's influence stood to their guns. They said 'the sneaking spirit of compromise would be fatal.' They drew a petition for complete repeal. When Keogh himself modified it, they made a display of force, and the Goldsmiths' corps of Volunteers re-appeared in arms and paraded in defiance of the proclamation. The corps were ordered to disperse instantly under threat of having their arms taken from them. They thought of resisting, but they reflected that there were now 2,500 soldiers in Dublin, and obeyed. Dr. Troy and five other bishops published a Pastoral to be read in every chapel in the kingdom. 'Loyalty and obedience to law had ever peculiarly distinguished the Roman Catholics of Ireland.' Those qualities 'should be more than ever conspicuous when the beloved Sovereign, the father of all his people, with unprecedented benevolence and condescension, had recommended their claims to the Legislature.'<sup>2</sup> Wolfe Tone began to perceive that he and the United Irishmen had been used by the Catholic Committee to frighten the Government, and had been flung over when the end was

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<sup>1</sup> Tone comments—'Sad! sad! I am surprised at Sir Thomas French. Merchants, I see, make bad revolutionists. So Gog's puffing has come to this.'—*Journal*,

January 21, 1793.

<sup>2</sup> 'Address of the five bishops, January 25, 1793.' — *Plowden*, vol. iv.

gained. 'Will the Catholics be satisfied?' he wrote. 'I believe they will, and be damned.'<sup>1</sup>

Dundas was scarcely less alarmed for the opposite reason. The Cabinet had consented to the limitation, 'to gratify the prejudices of the Protestants, and from a belief that larger concessions could not be carried in the Irish Parliament.' He was led to fear 'that the British Government had been the dupe of men who were either insincere in their expressions of apprehension, or had got the better of them when it suited their purpose.'<sup>2</sup> The Catholics, he was afraid, would reject the Bill, and the national party in Parliament would outbid the Government, again appeal to national sentiment, and raise the cry of a United Ireland.

Amidst these various alarms and distractions, Major Hobart's own opinion remained unchanged, that to yield to Irish intimidation never had and never would or could come to good. On the 4th of February, however, he fulfilled the task imposed upon him, and explained the details of the intended measure. The Catholics had been for ten years restored to their civil rights. The Act of '92 had opened the bar to them. But on the novel theory that no man was free who was not a consenting party to the laws by which he was governed, they were still slaves. Their shackles were now to be struck off. Their unremitting loyalty for

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, February 4 1793.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dundas to Westmoreland, February 9.' S.P.O.

a hundred years, Major Hobart said, showed the continuance of these political disabilities to be no longer necessary. He proposed to admit Catholics to the franchise, to the magistracy, and to the grand juries, on the same terms as Protestants. An English Act was about to open the army and navy to them. The Arms Act was to be repealed so far as affected Catholics possessing real estate or moderate personal property, and was to be extended to Protestants who had none.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Hercules Langrishe seconded Hobart with peculiar grace. The Catholics, he said, had come forward on earlier occasions to resist the invasion of a foreign enemy. They were coming forward now to resist the invasion of foreign principles more dangerous than armies, more cruel than the sword. The old dangers from Popery were extinct; new dangers had arisen against which the Catholics would be the truest allies.

If this was true, all would be well; but there followed Langrishe a speaker to whom it appeared not to be true, and who could give a reason for the faith that was in him. There had entered the House in 1790, among other new members, a certain Dr. Duigenan, sprung from the old stock of the O'Dewgenans, born in a mud cabin, Catholic of the Catholics, Irish of the Irish. Educated at a hedge school, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, February 4: compare *Irish Statutes*, 33 George III., cap. 21.

designed for the priesthood, young Duigenan had caught the eye of a Protestant clergyman, who introduced him into a grammar school. Having changed his religion and modified his name he found his way to a fellowship at Trinity College, and thence to distinction at the bar and to Parliament. Coarse in manners, rough in tongue, exactly informed of his country's history, and acquainted with his countrymen's character, he was a vulgar edition of Fitzgibbon, and resembled him as the buzzard resembles the eagle.

This man rose to speak for the first time when Langrishe ended. He held in his hand the Catholic petition, which he described as uprooting the policy which had resisted the shock of three general rebellions. He denied the loyalty of the Irish Catholics. He pointed to the Irish brigade in France. He spoke of the Irish regiments in the French service who had fought under La Fayette in America. More justly he pointed to the Whiteboys and Defenders, and to the midnight incendiaries who were plundering Protestant houses of arms—these at least the spontaneous growth of the Irish soil, who in all that they did 'were manifesting immortal hatred to the British name and nation.' 'The Irish Catholics,' he said,<sup>1</sup> 'to a man esteem all Protestants as usurpers of their estates. To this day they settle those estates on the marriage

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<sup>1</sup> And if Ireland was to remain | was as unanswerable as his facts  
a separate kingdom, his argument | were authentic.



of their sons and daughters. They have accurate maps of them. They have lately published in Dublin a map of this kingdom cantoned out among the old proprietors. They abhor all Protestants and all Englishmen as plunderers and oppressors, exclusive of their detestation of them as heretics. If the Parliament of this kingdom can be so infatuated as to put the Irish Catholics on a better footing than the English Catholics, and if the English nation shall countenance such a frenzy, either this kingdom will be for ever severed from the British Empire, or it must be again conquered by a British army. The Protestants of Ireland are but the British garrison in an enemy's country, and if deserted by the parent State must surrender at discretion. English Ministers are simply blind. I tell them they are greatly deceived if they have been induced to believe that an Irish Catholic is, ever was, or ever will be a loyal subject of a British Protestant King or a Protestant Government.'

Not a man in the House, not Grattan himself, if put on his oath, could have denied that in this last sentence Duigenan was speaking no more than the bitter truth; but nothing is so unpalatable as truth when it cannot be acted on. Speaker after speaker rose to deny what it was inconvenient to admit. Sir Henry Cavendish said that not another member in the House agreed in it. One member only, Mr. Ogle, of Wexford, had the courage to say that he did agree.

'The effect of the measure proposed,' Mr. Ogle

said, 'must be either a total separation or a union. I have always thought I would rather lay my head on the block than consent to a union. But I declare before the Almighty, I would rather pass an Act of Union than the Bill before the House.'

Duigenan's and Ogle's words, though unsupported in debate, found an echo in too many hearts to fail of their effect. Major Hobart sent word to the Catholic Committee that unless he could tell the House that they were satisfied, unless they would pledge themselves to dissolve, and cease to agitate thenceforward, the Bill would be dropped. The Parliament would resist where they stood, rather than give their opponents additional strength by yielding.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee received at the same moment a most significant intimation that, whatever the English Cabinet might say or think, the Irish Executive did not mean to be trifled with. A secret committee of the House of Lords had sat under Fitzgibbon's directions from the first day of the session to inquire into the causes of the general disorder. They had reported against Volunteer Corps and pseudo-representative conventions as incompatible with tranquillity. The day after the introduction of Hobart's Bill the Attorney-General alarmed the House with the information that large quantities of arms were being imported and distributed. A bill was introduced and rapidly passed forbidding the importation or possession

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<sup>1</sup> *Tone's Journal*, February 8.

of guns or powder without licence, or the removal of cannon or powder from one part of the country to another, and giving the magistrates power to search either ship, dwelling-house, or store where they had cause to suppose arms were concealed.<sup>1</sup> The Act was a sentence of death to the revived Volunteer Corps, which were instantly disarmed and suppressed. On the 6th of February Sir John Parnell moved for a new and effective Militia Bill, which would produce a force of 16,000 men, and at the same time he proposed the increase of the regular army to 20,000 men. Grattan inquired for what purpose such a force was needed. Hobart declined to explain. He said merely that the Government had reasons of their own for asking for it, and if the House refused consent, on them would rest the responsibility. There was no difficulty in gaining consent. The House, in their present panic, would have voted martial law if they had been asked. So armed, Major Hobart was able to present his alternative to the Catholic Committee, and to make them feel that he intended to adhere to it. They were sore and savage. These loyal subjects, whose deep and tried devotion to their Sovereign was to receive its reward in an extension of confidence, debated long and bitterly on their answer. Very unwilling were they to promise to abandon their trade of agitation, break up their gallant convention, declare themselves contented and

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<sup>1</sup> 33 George III., cap. 2.

satisfied. But the alternative, as Tone perceived, lay plainly before them. Were they ready to fight? Hobart showed no signs of flinching, and they decided that they were in no condition for 'tented fields.' They gave the assurance demanded of them. They said they did but ask the Irish Parliament 'to coincide with the will of the best of kings.'

Hobart was now ready to proceed. The Bill came on for the first reading on the 18th of February, and was the occasion of a remarkable speech from Sir Lawrence Parsons. Parsons was in favour of admitting the Catholics to seats in Parliament, but under conditions of the franchise which would have excluded the mob of Catholic peasants from a voice in the election, and would have restricted the right of voting to men of property and substance. In many points he was an advanced Whig, and the words, therefore, with which he opened the subject, contrasted as they were so remarkably with the opinions expressed by Edmund Burke, have peculiar value.

'The Catholics,' he said, 'have been deposed from power for a century, and I will lift my voice against any man who defames our Protestant ancestors for that deposition. I look to the temper of the times. I look to England and I see the same spirit. I look to France and I see Louis XIV. revoking the Edict of Nantes. What in France and England was persecution, in Ireland was policy.' 'The conditions were now altered. Protestants were no longer agreed in excluding the Catholics from a share in power.

England no longer desired it. On the eve of a desperate war it was unsafe to maintain any longer the principles of entire exclusion.' Major Hobart's proposal to extend the franchise generally, however, to the forty-shilling Catholic freeholders, Parsons considered could only have risen from ignorance of the condition of the country. The admission of the Catholics to the right of obtaining freeholds had already completely revolutionized the southern and western provinces. The great grazing farms held by Protestants had been broken up. 'Seven or eight Catholics were now holding the ground which one Protestant held formerly.' Poor, ignorant, bigoted, and now four times the number of the Protestants, these new constituents would rapidly obtain an entire control. The present Bill might only concede the franchise, but the exclusion from Parliament would not and could not be maintained. 'Give the Catholics the forty-shilling franchise, they would be a majority of electors. Being a majority of electors, they would return the majority of the House of Commons. The majority of the House of Commons would control the supplies, and, controlling the supplies, would be masters of the country.' Parsons declined to make over the State to the rabble. He would not admit such a multitude, he said, if they were Protestants and had been Protestants for twenty generations. The elections would be a scene of riot and bloodshed. He would propose instead to combine the two questions which were agitating the country.

There were three classes of Catholics—the gentry, who aspired to seats in Parliament; a middle class, with freeholds of 20*l.* a year and upwards; and the peasantry. The Government Bill excluded the gentry and included the mob. His own opinion was that the gentry should be admitted to the Legislature, and the franchise be confined to those who had sense enough to use it properly.

If such a restriction could have been maintained, Parsons' proposal was the wiser of the two. Unhappily it contradicted the rising political creed, that wisdom lay in the many and the noisy, not in the few and the intelligent. To be without a vote was to be a slave. The condition of a 20*l.* freehold would disfranchise half the Protestant tenants. Freedom, absurdly so called, was the idol before which Europe was learning to bow down, though as yet in fear and with half-averted face. It could not be. The amendment was rejected.

On the second reading, a lower limit was attempted at 10*l.*, but was again defeated.

Grattan was for complete repeal of all distinctions, and talked grandly of ideas germinating in the soul like the child in the womb, and destined, whether men would or no, to grow to their designed proportions. George Ponsonby described the Bill as a trick to seduce Catholics into looking to England for favour. He invited Parliament to throw it out, and bring in another of their own more comprehensive.

'There are three parties in the House,' wrote

Edward Cooke, 'those who would give nothing, those who are for everything, those who are for Major Hobart's Bill. The first is the largest, and would be decisive were it not for the influence and wishes of Government. The second is in reality small, but has been rendered considerable by the desperate opposition of those who act with a view to defeat the Bill, or if they cannot succeed, to revenge themselves on Great Britain by a reform in Parliament and the establishment of an Administration exclusively Irish. These are the Ponsonbies, Leinsters, Conollies, Grattans, &c.'<sup>1</sup> 'The Government will carry their Bill, but it is feared many of those who cannot obtain the limitation of the franchise will, upon defeat, join in resentment those who are for granting everything. The ground now taken by the Opposition is most dangerous. They say they have done enough to strengthen Government. They will grant no more power without redress of grievances, and I fear the effect of inflammatory language in the unsettled state of men's minds. The Catholics will be satisfied

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<sup>1</sup> The meaning of George Ponsonby's speech on the second reading was explained by Major Hobart:—

'George Ponsonby's point was to impute the change of sentiment in the Irish Parliament to what he termed English influence, and recommending the adoption of the Catholics into the Constitution as a means of strengthening Ireland and weakening Great Britain. The principle was too true to be without

impression. But the force of it was diminished by the conviction that no man in the country was more averse to the Catholics than the gentleman who pressed the House to grant them everything. He will not easily be forgiven by the Protestants, and he will certainly be despised by the Catholics.'  
—Major Hobart to Evan Nepean.  
*Private and secret.* February 26, 1793.

with what is proposed, and declare so unanimously. Had Major Hobart proposed more he would have lost all, *for the Ponsonbies have been lying in wait watching the turn of the business, and the measure for doing away all distinctions would have been so revolting that they might have successfully availed themselves of Protestant feeling.*'<sup>1</sup>

The second reading passed with only three dissentients. In Committee, Mr. Knox proposed the admission of the Catholics to Parliament. He was defeated by 163 to 69. Duigenan revived Sir Lawrence Parsons' proposal for the restriction of the franchise. If the Bill passed in its present form there would he said, be no refuge but a union; and rather than be a slave to the Catholics he would himself propose it. Sir John Parnell, though as a member of the Government he voted as Pitt required, yet expressed his belief that instead of conciliating the Catholics the grant of the franchise would only re-awaken forgotten animosities. He thought the time ill chosen, the example dangerous, the experiment one of which no person could foresee the results; but England chose that the measure should pass, and on England the responsibility must rest. The Speaker, John Foster, was no less emphatic in opposition. He was willing to grant the Catholics the fullest civil toleration. He deprecated giving them political power. An abstract right of voting as an inherent condition of liberty he ridiculed as nonsense. The franchise must be

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Nepean, February 26.' S.P.O.



followed by seats in Parliament. Official situations would follow. The Catholic clergy would insist on equality with the Protestant clergy. The Crown alone would remain to save the Protestant interest from overthrow; and there would thus be a direct and constant provocation toward a dissolution of the connection with Great Britain. He did not blame the Irish ministry. The measure began in England, but the raising the question at all had been an act of extreme folly and indiscretion.

All had been said that could be said, and on the inherent merits of the question Pitt perhaps would have agreed with Foster. He could not avow his true motives. He was aiming at a union, and looked to Catholic emancipation as a means of forcing the hand of the Protestant Parliamentary patriots. These gentlemen conjectured his purpose, and were contending to preserve their nationality. Could the profligate Whig aristocracy have retained their old monopoly of power they would have never troubled themselves about the Catholics. In the existing crisis they were unhampered with convictions, and were on the watch merely to take advantage of Pitt's mistakes. Had the Castle offered a full measure of emancipation they would have rallied the country on the Protestant cry against perfidious England. Had the Catholic petition been rejected in London, they were ready to open their arms to their oppressed fellow-citizens, to fall back, as in '82, on Belfast, Dunganon, and the Volunteers, to force a reorganization

of Parliament by a threat of rebellion, and so reign themselves, as they fondly believed that they would, over a united Ireland.

In the face of an opposition composed of—shall it be said—political brigands, Pitt had to feel his way. If his road was crooked, his aim was at least honest. The Bill passed the Commons, and no more words need have been spent upon it; but its passage through the Upper House was distinguished by a speech from the one supremely able man whom Ireland possessed, removed now by his high office from the sphere in which, as long as he was present, he had controlled the questionable elements of which all parties there were more or less composed.

The Peers trod generally the same round of arguments which had already been exhausted. The novel feature in the second debate was that Doctor Law, Lord Ellenborough's brother, a bishop of the Establishment, delivered himself of an oration in a style which since has become too familiar. Fitzgibbon, now Lord Clare, followed.<sup>1</sup> He said:—

'I have always felt peculiar reluctance in discussing the political claims of the Catholics of Ireland, feeling it impossible not to recur to past injuries, which it is my most earnest wish to bury in eternal oblivion. I could wish again to pass them by; but when the epidemical frenzy of the day has reached even that grave and reverend bench, and a learned

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<sup>1</sup> The speech, which can be | form, is recommended to the care-  
given here only in a most abridged | ful student of Irish history.

prelate has thought fit most wantonly to pour forth a torrent of exaggerated misstatements against the government of this country for two centuries, I cannot leave his indiscretion unnoticed and unreprehended. I should be sorry that anything that may fall from me should stop the progress of this Bill. After what has passed in Great Britain and Ireland, it may be essential to the momentary peace of the country that your lordships should agree to it, and I do not desire to be responsible for the consequences of its rejection. Therefore, I hope it will be understood that, much as I disapprove the principles of this Bill, whatever I may say upon the subject is intended to open the eyes of the people to the real state of the country, in the hope, if it be possible, to stop the further progress of innovation.

‘I lament that religious distinctions should prevail among us. I well know they have proved the source of bitter calamity to the people of Ireland. Religious bigotry produced Tyrone’s rebellion; religious bigotry produced the rebellion of 1641, and the horrid excesses which attended it; religious bigotry produced the rebellion of 1688, and the tyrannies and proscriptions of James the Second and his Parliament; and I am sorry to say that religious bigotry is at this hour as rank in Ireland as at any period to which I have alluded. A very great majority of the people are as zealously devoted to the Popish faith as the people of Spain or Portugal. I do not state it as a reproach. I wish in this particular

the Protestants of the Established Church would take example from their Catholic brethren; but when their political claims are discussed in Parliament the merits of the men must be dismissed from consideration. We must look to the principles of their religion, and to the unerring influence which those principles have had upon the political government of every country in Europe for centuries. From this point of view there is not a single instance in which Protestants and Papists have agreed in exercising the political power of the same State; and as long as the claims of Rome to universal spiritual dominion over the Christian world shall be maintained, it is impossible that any man who admits them can exercise the legislative power of a Protestant State with temper and justice.

‘There is not a country in which the Reformed religion has been established where its progress has been so slow and inconsiderable as in Ireland; and it is a strange argument to urge the abhorrence in which the Protestant religion is held by a majority of the people as a reason for admitting them to a full share of power in a Protestant State; yet this is the strong ground on which the advocates for emancipation rest their claims. They tell us the expectation of making Ireland a Protestant country is vain; that the people are unalterably devoted to the Catholic faith, and that justice forbids their exclusion from the State. That the people of this country are devoted to the Popish faith is too notorious to be disputed. When

the other nations in Europe were engaged in religious controversies they were in a state of barbarism and ignorance below the reach of curiosity and speculation. Licentious habits had long engaged them in resistance to the British Government. The example of the English settlers would have alone sufficed to make the Reformation odious to them; but from the first moment that the Act of Supremacy was promulgated in this country the habitual aversion of the natives to the English name and nation became savage and inveterate antipathy.'

Passing in rapid review the Elizabethan wars, the Ulster settlement, the rebellion of 1641 and the confiscations which ensued upon it, the last desperate struggle under James the Second, and the final defeat of the native Catholic party, the Chancellor continued:—

'Far be it from me to revive the memory of these things; but so much upon this subject has been addressed to the passions, and so little to the judgment, of Parliament, that I hold it the duty of every honest man to oppose broad and glaring facts to a loud and impudent clamour. The penal laws enacted in this country were a code forced on the Parliament by hard necessity, and to these old Popery laws, I do not scruple to say, Ireland stands indebted for her internal tranquillity during the last century. Let philosophers who exclaim against this code, as subverting the immutable principles of sentiment and fraternity, condescend to look to the situation of the

Protestant settlers at the Revolution. They were an English colony in the country of an enemy, reduced by the sword to sullen and refractory allegiance. In numbers they were a fourth of the inhabitants. The experience of a century had shown that the natives of the country had contracted an incurable aversion to them. They could not stand their ground except by disarming the enemies who surrounded them of political power.

‘ These laws in part disabled the native Irish from renewing hostilities against the English settlers or embarrassing the British Government; but there is another cause to which the tranquillity of the past century is to be attributed. From the Revolution to 1782 the aim of the possessors of power and property in this nation was to cement the connection between Great Britain and Ireland, and to cultivate the confidence of the British nation. In 1782 a new scene was opened. Having advanced claims which were acceded to in full by Great Britain, the two Houses plighted the national faith to stand and fall with her; yet, fatally for our country’s welfare, from 1782 to this hour the policy of the men who call themselves friends of the people has been to hold up Great Britain to the people as their rival and enemy—to concentrate the force of Irishmen of all religions against the English connection. The avowed object at this day of Irish reformers and Catholic emancipators is separation from Great Britain; and if they succeed, separation or war must be the issue.

‘From the moment that this fatal infatuation appeared in the other House of Parliament I stated in that House that it would lead to the event which I have now only to lament. In 1785 and 1789 I warned the nation of the consequences to which the giddy and fantastical speculations which then prevailed must lead. Till the modern Irish patriots had divided the Protestants of Ireland into opposite factions, we never heard of claims for political power advanced by Papists—nothing at all in the shape of a claim of right. What they desired was sued for as a favour; whatever was granted was accepted with gratitude. . . .

‘I meddle not with the speculative opinions of any Catholic. If he choose to subscribe to articles of faith which my reason and understanding reject, that is his business, not mine; but I object to all communication with the Court of Rome. Those who adhere to the Court of Rome are enemies to the realm of England, and unfit for any trust in a Protestant country. I wish young gentlemen who have urged the expediency of a total repeal of the Popery laws, and have offered to embrace their Catholic brethren for the wise purpose of resisting English influence, would take the trouble to look into the laws of the Roman Catholic Church, where they will find the principles of fraternity on which their Popish fellow-subjects are willing to meet them, and the Constitution under which they will be governed, should this become a Popish country. . . .

‘There is, as I learn from a modern publication of

Doctor Troy, a standing Cabinet of Cardinals at Rome for the government of Ireland—I presume the Cardinal of York is at the head of it—and the mild superintending influence of this Cabinet on the Irish Catholics will have the best effects in cultivating the hereditary attachment to the British nation. . . . I do not scruple to say that, in my opinion, it is an act of insanity in the Parliament of Ireland to open the efficient political powers of the State to persons in communion with the Court of Rome. If they do not make use of them to subvert a Protestant Government, they must resist the ruling passions and propensities of the human mind . . . . If we go a step further in innovation, if we agree to what is called Reform, this country is lost. I very much fear we have already made a precipitate and indiscreet experiment. The right reverend prelate says that the Catholics demand emancipation, that the people of Great Britain demand it for them, and that Great Britain will no longer assist the Protestants of Ireland in a system of oppression. The crooked folly of man could not have suggested a more mischievous observation. Great Britain must maintain her connection with Ireland, and she can only maintain it by maintaining the descendants of the English settlers, who, with few exceptions, form the Protestant interest there; and they in turn, however foolishly some of them may have acted in the last ten years, must know they can maintain their own position only by adhering to Great Britain.

‘The descendants of the old Irish who constitute



the Catholic interest feel that they can never recover the situation which their ancestors held in Ireland but by separation from Great Britain; and therefore if any man in Great Britain or Ireland is so wild as to hope that by communicating political power to the Catholics of Ireland they can be conciliated to British interests, he will find himself bitterly mistaken. Great Britain can never conciliate the descendants of the old Irish to her interests upon any other terms than by restoring to them the possessions and the religion of their ancestors in full splendour and dominion.'

Having thus relieved his mind, and having spoken what, however English statesmen might please to quarrel with it, was, is, and will be the exact truth upon the subject, the Chancellor concluded with saying that he would not divide the House against the Bill; and it was allowed to pass.

No immediately serious consequences were to be apprehended till the passing of a Reform Bill, and against a Reform Bill the Cabinet was firm. The Dungannon Convention met on the 15th of February, and decided that they must have it. Grattan brought the question before the House without waiting for the report of the committee. He electrified his hearers with the brilliancy of his oratory, but he failed to convince them that the Reform and Emancipation combined did not mean revolution. They admired the rhetoric; they acted by common sense.

'We have risks,' said Dennis Brown, 'like other countries, but risks peculiar to ourselves. Timidity is

not the way of safety. If we are to be directed by every breath of discontent, there is an end of us; property, life, and liberty will be buried in anarchy and confusion.'

The Reform Bill had been called in the debate 'an olive-branch of peace.' 'The olive,' said Bushe, 'is like other trees, and will not take root if planted in a storm. If you must touch the foundation of the building which has sheltered yourselves and your ancestors, let it be when the winds are at peace. You are choosing the Equinox, when Government and Anarchy are contending like day and night.' Grattan himself would probably not have demanded Reform at such a moment, had he not known that success was impossible. The House understood that after the concessions to the Catholics their hope of safety lay in strengthening the Executive Government, and they threw out the Reform Bill by a majority which for the present quenched the agitation.

The strength of Government was concentrated in resisting Reform, because Reform, among its other effects, would have been fatal to the Union; on all else the rule was to give way. After resisting for sixty years, the Cabinet consented to a limitation of the Pension List, which was reduced to 80,000*l.* a year; the Hereditary Revenue was surrendered and exchanged for a Civil List;<sup>1</sup> while a further Act for securing the independence of Parliament closed a scandalous chapter

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<sup>1</sup> 33 George III., cap. 34.

in the constitutional history of Ireland; and persons holding pensions during pleasure, or any salaried office under the Crown, were declared ineligible to any future Legislature.<sup>1</sup> The present House had still four years to run. In parting with the power which hitherto had alone enabled the Viceroys to carry on the Government, Pitt, it is likely, had already determined that the days of an independent Irish Legislature were numbered.

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<sup>1</sup> 33 George III., cap. 41.

## SECTION II.

HAD the gains and losses in the game of intrigue been confined to the players, their strokes and counter-strokes might have been observed with contemptuous interest. Behind Ministers and delegates lay unhappily the Irish people, who were being driven mad by visionary hopes, and through a thousand channels were taught to look for the day when Ireland would be once more their own, and the tyranny of centuries would be over. They were told that they were emancipated. To them emancipation meant that they were to pay no more rents and tithes. They heard of religious equality. If religious equality was to be worth having, it implied equality of property, land at ten shillings an acre or no shillings, and the sacred soil of Ireland no longer trampled by the hoof of the invader.<sup>1</sup>

The determination of Pitt to force on the Catholic question had passed like a stream of oxygen over the half-smothered and smouldering ashes. Savage at the submission of the Catholic Committee to Major Hobart's terms, the agitators told the peasantry that they were betrayed. The Defenders became every hour more numerous and more audacious. The United Irishmen of Dublin published a furious attack on the Secret Committee of the Lords which was almost an invitation to violence. The Government had little fear of open

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<sup>1</sup> Miscellaneous reports from the South and West of Ireland, April and May, 1793. S.P.O.

rebellion. They had great and well-grounded fears for the lives of the Protestant families who were scattered over the country by secret assassination.

To chain up the incendiary spirit before the fire spread further they summoned Simon Butler and Oliver Bond<sup>1</sup> to the Bar of the Upper House, sent them for six months to Newgate for breach of privilege, and fined each of them 500*l.* The increase of the army made possible at last more vigorous measures against the Defenders. Throughout the midland counties the peasants were now armed, either out of the Volunteer stores surreptitiously dispersed among them or by the plunder of the houses of Protestants. They were not afraid to meet the troops in the field: 'in Louth fifty of them were killed in a single fight in February; above a hundred were lodged in gaol; yet the Government felt that they were not yet at the bottom of the plot.'<sup>2</sup>

Undeterred by the suppression of 'the National Guard' in Dublin, the Northern Republicans paraded in green uniforms at Belfast. General Whyte was sent down in March to enforce submission. The Liberal journals published blazing stories of dragoons dashing through the streets with drawn sabres, insulting Patriot tradesmen, and behaving like infuriated savages, till the heroic Volunteers drew out and drove them from the town.<sup>3</sup> General Whyte tells what really occurred. He had sent four troops of the 17th Dragoons to disarm the

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<sup>1</sup> The Chairman and Secretary of the Dublin lodge. 26, 1793.'

<sup>3</sup> See Tone's *Memoirs*, March,

<sup>2</sup> 'Ed. Cooke to Nepean, Feb. 1793.

‘Guard.’ On the evening of the 9th of March a corporal and a private, off duty, strolled out of the barracks into the city, where they met a crowd of people round a fiddler, who was playing *Ça ira*. They told the fiddler to play ‘God Save the King.’ The mob damned the King, with all his dirty slaves, and threw a shower of stones at them. The two dragoons, joined by a dozen of their comrades, drew their sabres and ‘drove the town before them.’ Patriot Belfast had decorated its shops with sign-boards representing Republican notables. The soldiers demolished Dumouriez, demolished Mirabeau, demolished ‘the venerable Franklin.’<sup>1</sup> The Patriots, so brave in debate, so eloquent in banquet, ran before a dozen Englishmen. A hundred and fifty Volunteers came out, but retreated into the Exchange and barricaded themselves. The officers of the 17th came up before any one had been seriously hurt, and recalled the men to their quarters. In the morning General Whyte came in from Carrickfergus, went to the Volunteer committee room, and said that unless the gentlemen in the Exchange came out and instantly dispersed, he would order the regiment under arms. They obeyed without a word. ‘Never,’ said Whyte, ‘was any guard relieved with more satisfaction to themselves.’<sup>2</sup> The dragoons received a reprimand, but not too severe, as the General felt that

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<sup>1</sup> McCabe the owner of one of these shops, hung up his own portrait afterwards in the place of the destroyed friend of liberty, with

the words ‘McCabe, an Irish slave.’

<sup>2</sup> Report of General Whyte, enclosed in a letter of March 19 from Westmoreland to Dundas.

they had done more good than harm. On the 11th the Sovereign of Belfast was informed that the meeting of unauthorised armed associations was now forbidden by law; the Volunteers must cease to exist, and if they again assembled they would be apprehended and punished. The order was obeyed. 'The citizen defenders of Ireland's liberties,' said the 'Northern Star,' the organ of the United Irishmen, 'considered it more magnanimous' to bow for the present to tyranny. 'The time would come, and come shortly, when Ireland might see the saviours of the country once more in formidable array.'

To this had sunk the famous Volunteers of Ireland—the wonder of the world. The time for their reappearance did not come, and here was their final end. Their glory was to have won an independence which when brought to the test of fact was found 'a thing of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' Independence which was to be more than a name had first to be fought for; and the Volunteers, being formed of materials too worthless even for rebellion, were at last extinguished with ignominy.

The peasantry, unhappily for themselves, were made of sterner stuff. They boasted less. They passed no resolution about the inalienable rights of man; but they had in them the ancient inbred hatred of the Saxon conquerors. Coercion had awed them into submission, but with the first signs of weakness in the ruling powers the hereditary enmity revived. The landlords had sown the wind and were to reap

the whirlwind. The Irish nation, as it is passionate and revengeful, so beyond most others it is malleable by just authority. The Celtic 'earth-tiller' will repay his liege lord for kindness and generosity with romantic fidelity. Two centuries had been allowed to the Saxon intruders to win the affection of the native race. The Irish peasants remained in rags like their ancestors; lodged under one roof with their pigs and cows, paying rent to masters who had no care for their bodies; paying tithes to clergy who cared as little for their souls; maintaining gallantly, in the midst of their wretchedness, their own hedge-schools and their own priests; crooning their own songs and airs, and nursing their melancholy history; every rock and glen peopled with traditions of some battle with the Saxons, some daring exploit of hunted rapparees. So it had gone on till they were told that their chain was broken. They looked into the justice which was said to have been done at last, and they found that it meant no more than the privilege of helping to send one of their Protestant masters to Parliament. They heard that if they wanted more they must arm, as the Volunteers had armed. They must make the Government afraid of them, and the Government would then give them their way.

So long as the Catholic Committee was sitting in Dublin, the outbreaks of violence had been local, and under the influence of the priests the advanced Catholic patriots had abstained from organized conspiracy. In that body there was no longer hope. A general



meeting of the Committee was called on the 16th of April, to review the conduct of Keogh and the delegates. They had accepted Hobart's terms, and had promised that the Committee should be dissolved. Half the members of it believed that the cause had been betrayed. The Secretary ought to have been told to take back his Bill. The delegates ought to have insisted on the fulfilment of Dundas's promises. The country would then have been roused, and complete Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform would have been carried together. Keogh defended himself, but little to the satisfaction of his revolutionary friends. He was suspected of looking coldly on France, and of doubting whether the Catholic interests would be promoted by an alliance with the Jacobins. For a week it hung uncertain whether the Committee would consent to disappear, or whether it would continue as a 'National Congress, pledged to the most violent measures.'<sup>1</sup>

The moderate party carried the day. The members promised to work individually for Reform. As a representative body they decided to cease to exist. They passed a vote of thanks to the Viceroy in the name of the Roman Catholics of Ireland. The acceptance of it gratified their pride.<sup>2</sup> Not to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Hamilton to Major Hobart, April 22.' S.P.O. Compare *Tone's Journal*, April 16.

<sup>2</sup> 'It was represented to the Viceroy that the designation im-

plied that the Committee was a representative body, and that he ought not to receive it. Had he refused he would have thrown them into the arms of the United Irish-

quarrel with their revolutionary supporters, they voted 1,500*l.* to Wolfe Tone for his services, and as much to Simon Butler and Todd Jones; and the Catholic Committee and the Catholic Association, which had now merged into one, then suspended their further sessions. But they parted in discontent. The moderate Catholics, though successful for the moment, lost their influence. The United Irishmen became now the recognised leaders of all who desired the regeneration of their country, and the Catholic Defenders, passing rapidly under their orders, became the recognised army of liberty.

With the avowed purpose of preventing the enrolment of the militia, the peasantry rose simultaneously in Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Leitrim, Limerick, Clare, and Kerry. The regular army was still far short of its numbers, and was unequal to the task of controlling so large a tract of country. Mr. Tennison's house at Coalville was burnt, and three soldiers were killed. Marcray Castle, in Sligo, the house of Mr. Cowper, a staunch Protestant member of Parliament, was sacked, the arms carried off, and the cellars emptied. Mr. Wilson's house at Castlecomer was destroyed, and Mr. Wilson murdered. The town of Carrick was attacked. Some dragoons in the barracks there charged the mob, shot down thirty or forty, and took many more. The prisoners were sullen and

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men. The pail of milk would | confusion renewed.'—Mr. Hamil-  
have been kicked down, and all the | ton to Major Hobart, April 22.

savage; they were heard to mutter that 'in a month not a Protestant would be alive in Ireland.'<sup>1</sup> The spirit of 1641 was awake again. The insurgents' oath in Mayo was to pay neither tithe nor tax, quit-rent nor landlord's rent.<sup>2</sup> A Defender, mortally wounded in a fight, declared 'that when the Protestants and Presbyterians were disarmed they were all to be murdered in one night.' Copies of Paine's 'Rights of Man' were sown broadcast by the agents of the United Lodges. As summer approached Queen's County, Carlow, Wexford, Kilkenny, caught fire also. The cry rose that the French were coming to set Ireland free. A mob attacked the barracks at Dingle, meaning when they had destroyed the soldiers to dispose afterwards of the gentry. They were disappointed. The soldiers received them with a volley; fourteen fell dead; the rest fled, and were pursued and bayoneted. Thirty-six miserable wretches were killed at a fight in Erris. There was another sanguinary battle at Enniscorthy, in Wexford. The village of Bruff, in Limerick, was occupied in force, the streets were barricaded, the houses loopholed, and the Defenders were only driven out of it at last by cannon.

'The country,' wrote a correspondent of Mr. Burke from Limerick, in July, 'is in a state of complete insurrection. We hear of nothing but outrages

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<sup>1</sup> 'Reports from the West, May 26, 1793.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Westmoreland to Dundas, June 8.'

committed by armed mobs; and the country people, notwithstanding the numbers of them that have been already killed in these engagements with the army, seem to increase in ferocity and resolution in proportion to their losses. A few days ago there was an engagement at Kilfinnan, in which the greatest part of the town was destroyed; and the next day at Bruff, in which many of the poor wretches were killed. They have no fixed object, but a spirit has been excited of general discontent and opposition. Parties of armed people go about administering oaths, in some places against the militia, in others to pay no taxes, in others to pay no tithes. The consequence is, a furious spirit of opposition to the ruling powers in the lower classes of the people.'<sup>1</sup>

Supported by this bloody outbreak of disaffection, the United Irelanders opened their agitation for Parliamentary Reform, as the only measure which it was

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<sup>1</sup> This letter was forwarded by Richard Burke to Dundas, with characteristic comments of his own. 'I know,' he said, 'that an anonymous letter will have more weight with you than the most deliberate opinion which I or my father can give. Such is the effect of the service which he has rendered your Government. I also have been of service to you. If any part of the empire, or the whole of it, should be lost by the incurable alienation and distrust of the present Government towards us both, it will be a great fatality, but one which is within the bounds of possibility. I have done my best to prevent it—if that were the way to prevent it—by bearing without complaint or discouragement the worst possible treatment. What you are to do with Ireland in the condition to which those who have the honour to govern that country, under your auspices, have reduced it, I am sure I know not; it begins to be above me. I shall endeavour, however, to exculpate myself from the effects of their misgovernment.' — R. Burke to Mr. Dundas, from Beaconsfield, July 30, 1793.

supposed would now quiet the disturbance. They published an address to the Catholics, inviting them to join in demanding a measure without which they would find the franchise useless to them.<sup>1</sup> They informed 'the people of Ireland' that, in declaring war against the Revolution, England was declaring war against liberty. They bade them 'Assemble, assemble, and with the voice of injured millions demand their rights;' and having felt the strength which agitation gathered from having at its head a Representative Assembly, they invited Ireland to choose another, this time a true national association, which traitors should have no power to mislead; and they chose for the place of meeting, not Dublin, where Fitzgibbon might have them in his grasp, but Athlone, far away in the country, in the heart of the faithful Catholic population.

Parliament was still in session, busy with its Responsibility Bill and its new Civil List. The Catholic Committee had not been dissolved that its place might be taken by another and more dangerous Assembly of a similar kind. The Athlone Parliament would be composed of the most violent agitators in Ireland, and if allowed to meet would provide the anarchists with an organised Directory. On July 8 Fitzgibbon introduced a Bill into the House of Lords declaring the assemblage of bodies of men calling themselves representatives under any pretence what-

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<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the United Irishmen*, June 7, 1793.

soever to be thenceforth illegal.<sup>1</sup> The glamour of '82 had not yet entirely vanished. Patriotic sensibility was wounded by a measure which reflected on the great Dungannon meeting. The Duke of Leinster and Lord Charlemont fought against it in one House. Grattan, in the other, spoke of it as the boldest step yet made to introduce military government. Patriotic oratory, though it could still enchant, could no longer wholly make men blind. Tom Conolly, who was drunk when he rose to speak, said that, although he must vote with his friends, he heartily approved of the resolution which the Castle was showing. The Bill was carried, the teller for the Government in the Commons being Arthur Wellesley; and the meeting of a fresh Convention, which in the distracted state of the country 'would have been an engine of mischief almost irresistible,' was thus prevented.<sup>2</sup>

With the Convention Bill the session which had restored the Catholics to the Constitution came to an end. The concession of the franchise, in itself so momentous, was accompanied by the surrender of those irregular methods by which England had hitherto controlled the independence of Parliament. The millions to whose 'unfailing loyalty' these gracious measures were designed as a reward had received them in a manner which any one who knew

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<sup>1</sup> 33 George III., cap. 29.

<sup>2</sup> 'Major Hobart to Evan Nepean, July 20.'

Ireland could have foretold with certainty. The Irish peasant, like some half-tamed animal, docile under restraint, and obedient and uncomplaining when governed with firmness and justice, if let loose and told to be his own governor flies with a blind instinct at the hand which has unlocked his chains. Pitt and Dundas, partly misled by Burke, deceived partly by their own theories, partly feeling their way by a tortuous road towards a union, had taken a step which made the union a certainty, but no less certainly made inevitable, as preliminary to it, a desperate and bloody insurrection.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Major Hobart left Ireland at the close of this session, to be created Lord Hobart, and to be sent as Governor to Madras.

Richard Burke was so angry at an appointment which he regarded as a sign of the Cabinet's approval of Hobart's conduct in Ireland, that he actually remonstrated with Dundas, and sent Hobart a copy of what he had said, with a very curious letter:—

'Brighton, October 28.

'My Lord,—On the entrance to a political and criminatory discussion, to disclaim motives of personal animosity is a proceeding that may be liable to inconvenience. It may appear like mean affectation, or an ungenerous desire to extenuate the hostility which necessarily belongs to adverse discussions. On the other hand, not to disclaim those motives is to

forego the satisfaction warranted by the most vulgar example of doing my part at least to divest the contests we engage in from every mixture of private asperity. The former inconvenience seems to me to be the least. I do not, therefore, hesitate to assure your lordship, that I act on the present occasion solely upon public grounds, and without any resentful recollection of any occurrence in Ireland less pleasant which might be attributed to your lordship. I allude particularly to the treatment I received in the House of Commons on the day of Sir Hercules Langrishe's proposition. And if there is anything in my letter to Mr. Dundas which may appear peculiarly invidious and offensive to you, it does not proceed from personal ill-will, but is, as I conceive, necessitated by the circumstances which do not

## SECTION III.

THE air was charged with revolution. Each week brought news from France which set the patriots' pulses bounding. Lord Moira, who was now the hope of the Irish incendiaries, allowed himself to play

allow me to remit anything of the strength of my case.

'In the next place, I have to assure your lordship that the sole objection I have to your appointment to the Government of Madras is that it operates as a sanction and ratification to those measures which I feel myself under an indispensable obligation to criminate, as the only means to obviate the ill-effects upon the peace and welfare of Ireland, upon his Majesty's Government there, and upon the unity and strength of the empire.

'Mr. Dundas will inform your lordship that I have never ceased to represent the measures of your Government in the same point of view that I do now, which, if he has not informed you of, it is not my fault; and if your lordship will recollect the conversation I had the honour of having with you at your house in the Phoenix Park, you will not be surprised that I arraign your conduct criminally, and particularly in the capacity of a servant of the Crown. Many other measures have since occurred

which I have the misfortune of considering in a still more serious point of view. Your late appointment is no further the occasion of the step I am now taking than that it hastens the execution of a first intention to render these affairs the subject of public discussion in this kingdom; and as by the marked recognition of the measures of the Irish Government implied by that appointment, it induces me to lodge a series of criminal charges against that Government in the person of your lordship.

'After what I have said at the beginning it is almost unnecessary for me to express that I do not decline any sort of public or private responsibility which may attach to the course which I have taken or may hereafter take. The charges I shall pursue by such methods as shall appear to me most advisable to give them solemnity and effect.

'I have the honour to be, &c.,

'RICHARD BURKE.

'Rt. Honble. Lord Hobart.'

Hobart, enclosing the letter to



with their expectations. They gave him a dinner in Dublin, and an ardent orator spoke allusively of the great work which might lie before him. Moira, not disclaiming the possibility, replied, 'that when he appeared it would be as a rainbow to notify to distant countries that the tempest was over.'<sup>1</sup> But for the present the Convention Bill, backed by the militia, drove in the disaffection. The United Irishmen confessed themselves baffled, but 'vowed revenge.' Hamilton Rowan was reported as having grown 'morose, sullen, and determined.'<sup>2</sup> Thomas Muir, who was tried afterwards at Edinburgh for treason, had paid the society a visit in Dublin. The society in return voted an address to their Scotch brethren, and Rowan was sent over in charge of it. A prosecution was already hanging over him for a treasonable address. The Chancellor, finding forbearance thrown away, sent a warrant after him to Scotland. He was arrested, brought back, tried, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and to pay a fine of 500*l*.

There was now an interval of calm. The conspirators were frightened. The session of 1794 was  
<sup>1794</sup> a blank. The Opposition in Parliament was disheartened and divided, all but the most reckless

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Nepean, says:—'Every circumstance induces me to agree with you in thinking him entirely mad, and I only regret that the discovery was not made some time ago.'—

*MSS. Ireland.* S.P.O. Oct. 1793.

<sup>1</sup> 'Major Hobart to Evan Nepean, August 27, 1793.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> Note, unsigned, from an informer. 1793. S.P.O.

patriots having been sobered by the bloodshed of the past summer. William Ponsonby tried a Reform Bill again. It was extinguished by a decisive division of 142 to 44. The revolutionary peace party was equally unsuccessful. Grattan had promised Parnell that if the Place and Pension Bills were conceded, he would make no further 'vexatious opposition.'<sup>1</sup> He redeemed his word by speaking in favour of the war, and by repeating what he had said in 1782, that in a foreign contest Ireland was bound to stand or fall with Great Britain. The authority of Grattan was decisive with all who were not consciously disloyal.<sup>2</sup> The supplies were voted, the necessary business was hurried over, and, in the general desire to leave the Executive untrammelled, Parliament was prorogued on March 25.

The Executive had need to be free. Driven from the open field, the United Irishmen were now preparing for open rebellion. The eye of the Castle was on them. From the very first, traitors among themselves carried their most secret whispers to the Secretary. Every step on which they ventured was known, but so known only that it could be watched, not interfered with. Informers' evidence was not producible in a court of justice. Occasionally the conspirators were startled at their work by some public proclamation which proved that they were betrayed. The informers

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<sup>1</sup> 'E. Cooke to Evan Nepean, February 7, 1794.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'I never saw greater marks of chagrin painted on countenances than on those of Geo. Ponsonby,

Curran, Egan, and the lawyers in opposition, when Grattan declared his resolution to support the war.'

—*Ibid.*

in such cases were removed from Ireland, and settled with a pension in another country.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the information came from England. A week after Parliament rose the Viceroy was warned to be on the look-out for a dangerous visitor. The French Directory were anxious to discover the resources of the advocates of liberty in England and Ireland. They had employed a Protestant clergyman named Jackson, a friend of the famous Duchess of Kingston, and an ardent disciple of the new doctrines, to feel the pulse of the two countries and ascertain what kind of reception might be expected by an invading force. Jackson came from Paris to London in February, and there renewed his acquaintance with the Duchess of Kingston's attorney, a man named Cockayne. He was indiscreet enough to reveal the nature of his mission. Cockayne carried the information to Pitt, and at Pitt's suggestion he volunteered to accompany Jackson to Ireland, and communicate his movements to the Castle.

The pair arrived in Dublin on the 1st of April. Jackson called at once on a second old acquaintance, MacNally, a popular barrister. MacNally invited him and Cockayne to dinner, where they met Simon Butler, Ed. Lewines, another United Irishman, and several

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Collins, a silk mercer of Dublin, was one of the first of these useful betrayers of the secrets of the United Irishmen. He was a member of the Dublin lodge; and, from the day of his election, was in communication with Lord West-  
moreland. After Rowan's imprisonment, his further residence in Ireland was unsafe. 200*l.*, a year was settled upon him, and he was recommended for a situation in the West Indies.—'Cooke to Nepean. Secret. May 26. 1794.'

more. The conversation was free and treasonable. Jackson asked to be introduced to Hamilton Rowan, who was then in Newgate. The prison rules were construed lightly in favour of gentlemen of fortune. Rowan was allowed to entertain his friends in his private room, and, having learnt Jackson's object in coming to Ireland, received him and Cockayne at breakfast, Wolfe Tone making a fourth, as a fit person to negotiate with France. Tone had already sketched a paper to be laid before the Directory, describing the state of Irish parties, the numerical weakness of the gentry, the hatred felt for them by Catholics and Dissenters, and the certainty that, if France would assist, the Government could be overthrown.<sup>1</sup> It was suggested that Tone himself should go to France and concert measures with the chiefs of the Revolution. Tone hesitated, remembered that he had a wife and children, and for the first time in his life showed prudence. Rowan copied out the paper, and gave the copy to Jackson, who folded and sealed it, addressed it to a correspondent at Hamburg, and gave it to Cockayne to put in the post. Cockayne, who had already set the police on the alert, allowed himself to be taken with the paper on his person. Jackson was arrested. A friend warned Rowan of his danger; and he knowing that if his handwriting could be proved he would be hanged, persuaded the gaoler to let him go that night to his own house to see his wife. The gaoler

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is printed in the *Life of Wolfe Tone*, vol. i. p. 277.

went with him, to ensure his safe return to Newgate, but, not to intrude upon his prisoner's privacy, waited during the interview in the passage. Rowan slipped through a back window, mounted a horse, and escaped to a friend's house at Howth, where he lay concealed till a smuggler could be found who would convey a gentleman in difficulties to France. A couple of adventurous men were ready with their services. A day's delay was necessary to prepare their vessel, and meanwhile a proclamation was out with an offer of a reward of 2,000*l.* for Rowan's apprehension. The smugglers guessed who their charge must be; but in such circumstances a genuine Irishman would rather be torn by horses than betray a life trusted to him. They swore to land Rowan safe, and three days after he was in Brittany.<sup>1</sup>

Rowan was beyond the reach of the Government, but Tone remained; and there was Dr. Drennan, also an energetic incendiary, with whom Jackson had communicated, who had long been an object of anxiety. Dundas, to whom the Viceroy wrote for advice, recommended that Jackson should be admitted as an approver. With Jackson and Cockayne for witnesses, Tone and Drennan could be tried and hanged. The

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<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Rowan here disappears from the story. He went to America, and was condemned in his absence for treason. Fitzgibbon, however, interfered to save his large estates for his family, and in 1799, when the rebellion was over, promised to procure his pardon. Fitzgibbon died before the promise could be redeemed, but he left it in charge to Castlereagh's care. In 1805 the pardon was made out, and Rowan returned to Ireland, where he lived quietly the rest of his life.

Viceroy was obliged to answer that no Irish jury would convict on such evidence. The attempt would end in disgrace.<sup>1</sup> Jackson himself could be convicted; but about this, too, there was difficulty, for Cockayne had disappeared. Knowing that his life would not be safe in Dublin for an hour, he had stolen away on the instant that the mine was exploded, and was again in London. He was found and carried back to Holyhead, where he fell ill with terror, and could not be moved. At length, but not till after a year's delay, he was carried over and kept under guard, and in April 1795 Jackson was brought to the bar. His trial was the first of the list in which Curran was to earn immortality as the advocate of misguided patriots. Curran, George Ponsonby, MacNally, T. Emmett, Guinness, all the strength which Irish Liberalism could command, was enlisted in the prisoner's service. Curran's skill in torturing informers was as striking as his eloquence. He stretched Cockayne as painfully as ever the rackmaster of the Tower stretched a Jesuit. He made him confess that he had been employed by Pitt. He showed that, if Jackson was a traitor to the State, Cockayne was a far blacker traitor to the friend who trusted him. Lord Clonmel, who presided, explained to the jury that if they disbelieved Cockayne the case must fall. But Jackson's guilt was too patent to leave excuse for doubt. The trial

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<sup>1</sup> 'Westmoreland to Dundas, May 12.'

lasted till four in the morning, but the jury required but half an hour to consider their verdict. A remand was ordered for four days, at the end of which the prisoner was to be brought again to the bar to receive sentence. Irish history is full of melodrama, but never was stranger scene witnessed in a court of justice than when Jackson appeared again. It was April 30, 1795. On his passage through the streets in a carriage he was observed to be deadly pale; once he hung his head out of the window and was sick. The crowd thought he was afraid. At the bar he could scarcely stand; and Lord Clonmel, seeing his wretched state, would have hurried through his melancholy office. The prisoner was told to raise his hand. He lifted it feebly and let it fall. He was called on to say why sentence should not be passed against him. He could not speak. Clonmel, was proceeding, when first Curran and then Ponsonby interposed with points of form. As Ponsonby was speaking Jackson fell forward over the bar. The windows were thrown open. It was thought that he had fainted. The attendants caught him, and he sank back into a chair insensible.

‘If the prisoner cannot hear me,’ Clonmel said, ‘I cannot pass judgment. He must be taken away. The Court must adjourn.’ ‘My Lord,’ said the Sheriff, ‘the prisoner is dead.’ To escape the disgrace of execution he had taken arsenic in his tea at his breakfast.

In a note which he had left in his room he had

bequeathed his family to the French Directory; but philosophy had not entirely stifled the sad voice of the creed of his earlier age. In his pocket was found a paper, on which was written in his own hand: 'Turn thou unto me and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and in misery. The troubles of my heart are enlarged. Oh bring thou me out of my affliction. Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive me all my sins.'



## SECTION IV.

BEFORE the appearance of Jackson in Ireland a French invasion had been contemplated as a too likely possibility.<sup>1</sup> There was no longer a doubt that a campaign in Ireland was deliberately contemplated, and if attempted would cause immediate insurrection. A powerful party, of whom Burke was the principal, were for ever clamouring to Pitt that the renewed disturbances were only due to the imperfect confidence which had been placed in the Catholics, and to the exasperation created by the repressive measures of Lord Westmoreland. The Cabinet was modified in the summer of 1794 by the accession of the moderate Whigs. Portland, Spenser, and Fitzwilliam became members of Pitt's Administration. Portland, who had had experience of Ireland, was less sanguine than his friends on the good effects to be expected from conciliation. Spenser and Fitzwilliam were as confident as Dundas that, if the Catholic gentry and prelates could be introduced into the Government,

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<sup>1</sup> 'The French will not act with the desperate ability which they have manifested on other occasions if they do not make some attempt on Ireland. If once established here, in however small numbers, they might raise a convulsion that would require the whole exertions of England to repress. The people of property are well disposed, but the lower orders would rejoice in every opportunity of plundering them, and revenging what they would call the cause of their ancestors.'—'Westmoreland to Dundas, January 14.'

the body of the people would immediately return to their duty. In August leading Irishmen of different shades of opinion were invited to London. The two Ponsonbies, Grattan, Sir John Parnell, and others saw Pitt collectively and separately. They found him cold and reserved, rather looking for their views than offering his own. They spoke of drawing together the Protestant and Catholic gentry. 'But whose,' he asked sharply, remembering the Commercial Propositions, 'whose will they be when they are reconciled?' 'What did Ireland want?' he said to Grattan. Her taxes, in proportion to her wealth, were lighter than the English; the East Indian monopoly had been relaxed in her favour. Not a single commercial privilege which England possessed was withheld from her. What more would she have? Grattan said she required the admission of the Catholics to Parliament, and Pitt let him go away with the impression that although it would not be made a Government measure it would not be opposed.

To give political power to men already in a state of incipient rebellion as a bribe to quiet them has never, except in Ireland, been considered a hopeful policy, nor in Ireland has it been found to succeed better than elsewhere. Pitt was thinking of a union; and could he have been sure that the union could be secured, the venture, though a hazardous one, might still have been risked without extreme imprudence: but the companion measure of Emancipation would be almost necessarily Reform; and

Pitt's ignorance of the country must have been extraordinary, even in an English Prime Minister, if he could dream that Catholic Ireland, in constitutional possession of the power which the majority of numbers would confer on the Catholic party, would then be persuaded to part with her independence. No one now can tell what Pitt precisely thought. Certain only it is that he resolved at last, and that he brought the King to consent to recall Lord Westmoreland, and to appoint in his place Grattan's intimate friend, and a most ardent supporter of Catholic Emancipation, Lord Fitzwilliam. It is certain also that the appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam was to imply a change of measures, an attempt of some kind to conciliate, and the admission into the Council of the leading members of the Irish Opposition. There had been much hesitation and more than one change of purpose. In

1794 August Fitzwilliam told Grattan that all was settled, that he was going over, as the Duke of Portland had gone in '82, with power to act as circumstances might require.<sup>1</sup> Two months passed. Pitt was still undecided, and Grattan had learnt that if Fitzwilliam went at all it would be with precise instructions, which he would not be at liberty to set aside.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulty may have arisen with the King. George the Third knew his own mind about Ireland, and, could he have been listened to, would have made crooked things straight there thirty years before with-

<sup>1</sup> 'Fitzwilliam to Grattan, August 23.'—*Grattan's Life*, vol. iv.

<sup>2</sup> 'Grattan to McCan, October 27, 1794.'—*Ibid.*

out Catholic Emancipation. The resolution, however, was taken at last. Fitzwilliam was to go, and took the oaths in the King's presence on December 10, Grattan being present at the ceremony. It was to be presumed from the selection of a person whose opinions were so well known, that in some degree he was to be allowed to act on them. But in detail his hands were tied. He had desired to dismiss the whole body of the Irish advisers of Lord Westmoreland as personally hateful to the people. He was forbidden to dismiss any of them without special permission from England. With regard to the Catholic question, 'Lord Fitzwilliam was to endeavour to prevent it from being agitated at all. If he failed, he was to use his diligence in collecting the opinions and sentiments of all descriptions of persons and transmit them for the information of his Majesty.'<sup>1</sup>

1795

The limitation was unsatisfactory to Grattan, whose dream was to force Emancipation, and by Emancipation realise at last his passionately hoped-for Irish nationality. It should not fail, at all events, for want of agitation. On the completion of the ceremony, he hurried back to Ireland. With less than his usual truthfulness, he made free use of Fitzwilliam's name. He told the Catholics that they had only to ask loud enough for all their demands to be conceded, and a

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<sup>1</sup> 'This is the account which was given by the Cabinet in the following March to Lord Camden.' —*MSS. Ireland. Secret. March* 26, 1795. S.P.O. . . . It may be taken as conclusive on this much-disputed point.

committee was organized, on which were the names of Dr. Macneven and Richard McCormick,<sup>1</sup> to address Fitzwilliam on his arrival in the name of the Catholic body.

Fitzwilliam had misconceived his directions, or imagined that he had, after all, discretionary power. Fitzgibbon was too high game to be struck at without preparation; but the first act of the Viceroy on arriving at the Castle, notwithstanding positive commands to the contrary, was to shake off such servants of the Crown as had been especially in Lord Westmoreland's confidence. John Beresford, the Chief Commissioner of the Customs, received his dismissal; Edward Cooke received his dismissal. The Attorney and Solicitor Generalship were required for George Ponsonby and Curran; and Wolfe and Toler received an intimation that as soon as formal consent could be obtained from England their services would no longer be required.<sup>2</sup> Personally convinced of the necessity of giving way on the Catholic question, Fitzwilliam naturally found the agitation which Grattan had excited to be irresistible. Society was disorganized, respect for law destroyed, life and property totally without protection. The country would be uninhabitable without the instant enrolment

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<sup>1</sup> McCormick was Tone's friend Magog, whose religious opinions the reader will remember. Macneven, when examined afterwards before the secret committee of the House of Lords, acknowledged that Catholic Emancipation was never

more than a pretence to help forward a revolution.

<sup>2</sup> 'Wolfe was to be pacified by the grant of a peerage to his wife.' — 'Fitzwilliam to the Duke of Portland, January 8.' S.P.O.

of a constabulary and a yeomanry cavalry; but then a local force must necessarily be composed of Catholics, and Fitzwilliam had discovered that they could not be trusted with arms till the last of their political disabilities had been removed.

The first argument for admitting the Catholics to the Constitution had been their approved loyalty. Now the argument was their disloyalty which no other remedy would remove. Yet so satisfied was Fitzwilliam with the force of his reasons, that he forgot or set aside his instructions. Instead of collecting opinions from persons of different views, and forwarding them for consideration of the Cabinet, he informed Portland, within a few days of his arrival, that delay was impossible, and that unless he was positively forbidden he should act on his own judgment.

'I distinctly for myself say,' he wrote, 'that not to grant cheerfully on the part of Government all the Catholics wish will not only be exceedingly impolitic, but perhaps dangerous. The disaffection among the lower orders is universal. Though the violences now committing are not from political causes, but the outrages of banditti, they are fostered by that cause. The higher orders are firmly to be relied on; the wealthy of the second class hardly less so, because they are fearful for their property; yet the latter at least have shown no forwardness to check these outrages, and this can only arise from there being something left which rankles in their bosoms . . . Don't delay to speak with Pitt on the subject. If I receive no

peremptory directions to the contrary, I shall acquiesce with a good grace, to avoid the appearance of hesitation. Even the appearance will produce incalculable mischief—the loss of confidence of the Catholics, and the giving rise to a Protestant cabal . . . We know it must come sooner or later. Delay will only make the Catholics useless in the interval, if not dangerous.’<sup>1</sup>

Fitzwilliam had landed on the 4th of January. Ten days had sufficed to work so strong a conviction,<sup>1795</sup> that even the Cabinet was not to be allowed time for reflection. The Catholics were to be admitted into an Irish Parliament under conditions which must almost immediately give them an enormous preponderance, because they would no longer be loyal subjects of the Crown under other conditions. To such an attitude had concession brought the three million loyal hearts and hands who in the American war, when the penal laws were at their height, had laid themselves at the feet of the best of kings.

Parliament opened on the 22nd. Fitzwilliam did not venture to fly so directly in the face of his orders as to recommend the Catholic claims from the throne. The speech was long, pompous, and flatulent, but was silent on the great subject. Grattan, however, in the quasi-position of a minister of the Crown, loaded the tables with petitions industriously procured by his agents, and announced that on an early occasion, he would himself introduce a bill for the complete

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Fitzwilliam to Portland, January 8 and 15, 1795.’ Abridged.

abolition of all religious distinctions. Fitzwilliam informed the Chancellor that, 'now that the question was in agitation, he should give Grattan his full support.' Fitzgibbon replied 'fully and earnestly, stating his alarms and the grounds of them;' but he concluded that the Viceroy must be acting by instructions, and that Pitt had decided finally in carrying out the policy which he knew to have been for several years in contemplation; he said that, if England chose to have it so, the Irish Parliament could, no doubt, be forced into acquiescence.

Fitzwilliam in his report to the Cabinet implied as little uncertainty that he would meet with the fullest approbation of Pitt. He informed Portland on the 28th that everything would run smoothly.

'Ireland,' he said—writing, of course, what Grattan told him—'will go even beyond my wishes. We propose to have forty thousand men in arms, raising the militia to twenty thousand, and the regulars to as many. We will send men to England; you must send others here, and I earnestly beg that we may have them . . . Besides these I look to a yeomanry cavalry; *but it must not, as I said, precede the Roman Catholic business. It will be prudent not to hurry the yeomanry question; for should the Catholic question fail we must think twice before we put arms into the hands of men newly irritated.*'<sup>1</sup>

The fear of possible failure referred evidently to the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Fitzwilliam to Portland, January 28, 1795.' S.P.O.



Irish Parliament, and not to any anticipated difficulty on the part of England. Meanwhile the Cabinet remained silent. One significant indication Pitt did give, that he was not satisfied. He intimated his disapproval of the changes at the Castle. Beresford, who had gone to England to see him, returned to resume his place at the Revenue Board. He brought back with him an intimation that the resignations of Wolfe and Toler would not be accepted. But on the Catholic question the Viceroy received no directions at all. He had concealed nothing. He had spoken as plainly as possible of his own intention to support Grattan, yet week passed after week, and he heard nothing. Without fuller knowledge of what had passed privately between himself and Pitt before he left England, he cannot be acquitted of culpable precipitancy. As little is it possible to acquit the Cabinet of extraordinary negligence in allowing Fitzwilliam to commit himself so deeply if they were themselves still undecided; still less can they be acquitted for having kept in complete ignorance of the contents of Fitzwilliam's despatches a person whose consent was indispensable to any intended change.

Grattan's motion was fixed for the 12th of February. Perplexed rather than alarmed at finding his letters unanswered, Fitzwilliam begged him to postpone it, and again appealed to Portland.

'I trust,' he said, 'you and your colleagues will recommend his Majesty to permit the matter to be brought to a point. Equality is already granted in

the Act of '93. It remains to be considered whether the symbol of it shall be granted or withheld. The peace, tranquillity, and harmony of the country may now be sealed and secured for ever. We cannot depend on the affection and attachment of the lower orders. The whole united strength of the higher may be necessary to control the lower in allegiance. In the face of what is going on abroad we must unite all the higher orders in a common cause. . . . Mr. Grattan's plan is a short and simple one. First, a general repeal of all restrictive and qualifying laws; that done, to alter the oaths, that the people may be made one Christian people, binding themselves by one civil oath in a common cause. You will ask, do I mean to carry the principle to the full extent of a general capacity for every office? I certainly do, for all not regal or ecclesiastical. These I reserve, and these only. I would not reserve the highest office in the State—not the Seals nor the Bench. To make a reservation would be to leave a splinter in the wound. Should an enemy land, the safety of the kingdom depends on the unanimity of the higher orders, and that only—such is the insubordination of the lower, such their disaffection. These are my sentiments. Lay them before his Majesty, and impress his Majesty with the extent of the mischief that may probably arise by any attempt on my part, so acting in his Government, to oppose or circumscribe the measure of favour to the Catholics.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Fitzwilliam to the Duke of Portland, February 10, 1795. Secret and confidential.' S.P.O. Abridged.

The worship of a formula by modern politicians is the exact equivalent of ancient idolatry, and is equally proof against the plainest evidence of sense. A Reform Bill would be the necessary consequence of emancipation. The peasantry already enfranchised would then be in possession of the entire power of the State, and their inveterate insubordination and disaffection was alleged as the reason for bestowing it upon them. Unfortunately, it was not only the alleged reason—it was the real reason. The Viceroy, and to a large extent at least the English Cabinet behind him, was possessed with the ‘Irish idea’ that fire could be extinguished by pouring oil upon it; and Grattan, who understood the situation, took care that the agitation should not slacken. Instead of emancipation, he moved on the 11th of February, as a means of restoring order, for the repeal of Fitzgibbon’s Police Bill. On the 12th, unexpectedly, since it was understood that he was to apply for a postponement, he brought in his Catholic Bill, and Fitzwilliam on the 14th wrote once more with the most earnest emphasis to Pitt to tell him that the country was on the edge of rebellion, and that nothing but the Relief Bill could save it.

There are times in the highest affairs of State, as well as in matters of ordinary personal conduct, when the weak things of this world are chosen to confound the wise—when instinct is blind, and simplicity and honesty have their eyes open. If political ability consists in pursuing honourable aims, and in choosing means by which those aims can be effectually obtained,

the ablest directions for the conduct of Ireland had been those which were drawn by George the Third in the year after his accession. Now at this critical moment, when the advisers of the Crown were walking in a dream, and would if left to themselves have doubtless gone where Grattan pleased to lead them, the King, whose advice had been neglected before, chose this time to be obeyed.

Up to the 5th of February, when the Cabinet had been themselves for three weeks at least aware of what Fitzwilliam was doing, the King had been <sup>1795</sup> kept in ignorance that any immediate step in favour of the Catholics was in contemplation. On that day he was informed, 'to his greatest astonishment,' that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had proposed a total and immediate change in the principles of government there, and that on the very next day the question was gravely to be laid before the Cabinet. With a simplicity equivalent to the keenest satire he informed Pitt that he could not reconcile himself in such hasty fashion to reversing the entire policy of the past century. To be told that former indulgences availed nothing without consenting further to a revolution, 'was the strongest justification of the old servants of the Crown in Ireland' who had objected to those indulgences. The course now entered upon must tend sooner or later to a separation of the kingdoms. It was contrary to the principles on which the House of Hanover was invited to the crown. In fact, and in short, he would not permit the Cabinet to

encourage the Lord Lieutenant to go further 'until the leading men of every order in the State' had been consulted.<sup>1</sup>

Ten days followed of pain, uncertainty, and, it is to be hoped, humiliation; for under any and every hypothesis the conduct of the Cabinet had been inexcusable. Private notice, probably, was sent to Grattan, and led him to the precipitate introduction of his Bill. It was not, however, till the 16th that the result of the deliberations was made known formally to Fitzwilliam. On that day two despatches were addressed to him by the Duke of Portland. The first, which was intended to be shown to the Irish Council, was a repetition of the instructions which Fitzwilliam had carried with him to collect opinions on the probable effects of concession, and to send them over. From the tone of this letter no decisive inference could be drawn. The second and private letter was totally different. The Duke indicated a disagreement from Fitzwilliam on his own part so total, that the misunderstanding is explicable only on the supposition that Portland, who knew Ireland, had been overruled all along by Pitt and Dundas, who knew nothing of it.

To yield to the clamours of the Irish Catholics, he said, was the way to make them irresistible and ungovernable; must change the constitution of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Letter from the King to Pitt, February 6, 1795.'—*Life of Pitt*, vol. ii. Appendix, p. 23.

House of Commons, and with it overthrow the Church Establishment. The House of Commons was composed largely of members for small boroughs erected purposely to maintain the Protestant ascendancy. Common sense and human nature forbade that these boroughs could survive the change now intended. A Reform Bill would follow, and all the declarations and assurances which might now be given could not prevent a consequent revolution in Church and State.<sup>1</sup>

Fitzwilliam did not yet realise that the Cabinet had come to an unfavourable conclusion. He continued to argue as if the question was still open.

‘You are thinking,’ he replied, ‘of a union between the two kingdoms, as a good to be expected from deferring the concession. If you rely on such an expectation, it will be the union of Ireland, not with Great Britain, but with France. You calculate on confusion from which the union will be welcomed as an escape. Church and State are safe as long as the laws stand. Conciliate the higher Catholics by concessions, and if the laws are threatened and a union is necessary to save property, they will cry for it as loudly as the Protestants.’<sup>2</sup>

The uncertainty might have been protracted through further correspondence had not Grattan ended it by the introduction of his Bill. He, and perhaps

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Two letters from the Duke of Portland to Lord Fitzwilliam, February 16.’ Abridged. S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> ‘To the Duke of Portland, February 21.’ Abridged. S.P.O.

Fitzwilliam with him, believed that the Cabinet would be not ill-pleased to find themselves committed by an irretrievable step. They had heard probably from other quarters that the King had interposed, and they wished to make retreat impossible. They had miscalculated the King's resolution. The step which they had ventured was unknown when Portland wrote on the 16th. On the 17th the news arrived in London that the Irish Government had openly committed itself, and that 'the outlines of the intended Bill had been laid before the House with the consent of the Viceroy, before an opportunity had been allowed to the Cabinet of expressing an opinion upon it.' The Duke wrote at once, kindly indeed but emphatically, to tell Fitzwilliam that there was not a difference of opinion in the Cabinet on the extreme impropriety of his conduct. He 'could not repress his astonishment' that Grattan should have been allowed to introduce his Bill. He directed Fitzwilliam 'in the plainest and most direct terms to take the most effectual means in his power to prevent any further proceedings with it until his Majesty's further pleasure should be signified to him.'<sup>1</sup>

Five days later he wrote again, 'by the King's command,' that as circumstances might arise to satisfy Lord Fitzwilliam of the undesirableness of his remaining in the Administration, he was 'authorised to resign'—'the manner being left to his discretion.' Fitzgibbon and the Speaker, the two most vigorous

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† 'Portland to Fitzwilliam, February 18, 1795.' S.P.O.

opponents of Emancipation, were named with the Primate 'Lords Justices.'<sup>1</sup>

All was now confusion. The most confident expectations had been excited. The political patriots and the priests had each regarded Ireland as their own. 1795.  
The United Irishmen had counted the one step gained to which the next was to be separation from England. The peasantry believed that they had paid their last sheaf of tithes and their last shilling of rent. At once the cup was dashed from their lips. Many a mad exploit had been achieved in Ireland by the negligence or folly of Ministers, but this last was above and beyond them all. The Catholic Committee reassembled in haste in Dublin. They again reviewed their forces and found themselves unequal for the present to an unassisted insurrection. They determined to organize. They debated the propriety of applying for help to France.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile Keogh and Byrne and McCormick were sent to London with a petition to the King that the Viceroy might remain with them. The Committee itself passed a vote of thanks to the Belfast Republicans

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<sup>1</sup> 'Portland to Fitzwilliam. Most secret and confidential. February 23.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'I am informed through a channel which has been much relied on in former administrations, that the Catholic Committee are forming a select and secret committee of a few, who in future are to be trusted with larger powers. They are to take an oath of secrecy

and perseverance. It is said that, on a close investigation of their strength and influence on the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, they despair of anything effectual without the assistance of the French, and it is seriously in contemplation to send an embassy to Paris, if the Catholic question should be lost in the Irish Parliament.'—'Pelham to the Duke of Portland, March 30.' S.P.O.



for their early and steady support of Emancipation. To Grattan they voted an address, in which they declared that 'Protestants and Catholics were united to resist the outrage which had been offered to Irish pride,' and that if Fitzwilliam was taken from them, his successor should be received by the hisses of a betrayed and irritated nation. Grattan answered that Emancipation would still pass. It might be the death of one Viceroy, but it would be the peace-offering of another. He declared that he would himself proceed with his own Bill, and carry it he would, immediately or hereafter. In recalling Fitzwilliam, he said 'Britain had planted a dagger in Ireland's heart.'<sup>1</sup>

Parliament, which had supposed itself deliberately abandoned, could not at first conceive what had happened. The Duke of Leinster carried a resolution in the Lords that Fitzwilliam deserved their confidence. Sir Lawrence Parsons carried an address to him in the Commons not to abandon the country. Gradually it began to be understood that there had been some extraordinary mistake, but where or how was unexplained. 'If,' said Parsons, on the 2nd of March, 'the Irish Administration has encouraged the Catholics in their expectations without the countenance of the British Cabinet, they have much to answer for. If the British Cabinet has assented and afterwards retracted, the demon of darkness could not have done more

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<sup>1</sup> 'Address of the Catholics to Grattan, with Grattan's answer, February 27, 1795.'—*Plowden*, vol. iv.

mischief had he come from hell to throw a firebrand among the people. Let the Ministry persevere, and the army must be increased to myriads, and five or six dragoons must be quartered in every house in the kingdom.'

The opponents of Emancipation made their advantage of the confusion. 'May no one, then,' inquired Sir John Blaquiere, 'have an opinion of his own on the Catholic question, without a guard of soldiers to protect him?'

'Are we to listen to such words as these?' said Ogle; 'and are the Roman Catholics to gain credit for loyalty?'

The temper of men was so excited that the transfer of authority to the Lords Justices was held too dangerous to be ventured, and the Chancellor and the Speaker themselves begged the Viceroy to remain till a successor arrived. Fitzwilliam was careful to explain that he continued in Dublin only in consequence of their request. 'Apprised as he was of the sentiments of H.M.'s confidential servants that nothing short of the annihilation of H.M.'s Government was impending by his remaining in office,' he yielded 'reluctantly to the entreaties of the respectable persons whom H.M. had pointed out for Lords Justices,' and undertook not to abandon the Government before the end of the month.<sup>1</sup>

On all grounds the interval of uncertainty was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Fitzwilliam to the Duke of Portland, March 7, 1795.' S.P.O.

made as brief as possible. To replace Fitzwilliam the choice of the Government fell on Lord Camden, the son of the Chancellor, who was already favourably known in Ireland, and whose sister was the mother of Lord Castlereagh. Pelham, who had been already for a short time Secretary under Lord Northington, was prevailed on to resume duties which had already made him acquainted with the leaders of the Irish Parliament. The line to be followed by the new Government was indicated in the following instructions:—

‘The circumstances are so peculiar,’ the Duke of Portland wrote to Camden, ‘that I must inform you of  
1795 the reasons why Lord Fitzwilliam was appointed, and why you are to succeed him. As to the Catholic question, it was understood that Lord Fitzwilliam was to prevent it being agitated at all. If he failed he was to use his diligence in collecting the opinions and sentiments of all descriptions of persons, and transmit them for the information of his Majesty. Things are no longer in the same state, but our general directions to you are the same. You cannot prevent the discussion, nor should I advise you, even if you have the power, to negative the first reading of Mr. Grattan’s Bill. The most desirable means by which it can be stopped are those which will be most likely to convince the better and more reasonable part of the inhabitants of Ireland that in the present state of the country the measure only gives them the choice of evils. Either the proposed concession will create in the Catholics a power and influence which will place them above

control, or if, as the friends of the measure contend, it will prove incapable of affecting the civil and ecclesiastical establishments, it will leave the Catholics in the state which makes the groundwork of their present complaints.

‘ You will find great firmness necessary to rally the friends of the Protestant interest, and give them courage to meet the question fairly. The divisions among themselves, the opinions which cannot but have prevailed too generally of the favourable disposition of Government to the Catholic pretensions, must all have tended to dispirit and enervate the Protestants in general. You must, therefore, hold a firm and decided language from the first moment of your landing in Ireland, and take upon yourself to give the tone in which this business shall be talked of by the supporters of Government. Unless it shall be made evident by your Lordship that there is no difference whatever between you and the King’s servants on this occasion, and that it is your joint and deliberate opinion that a stand should be made if possible against the further claims of the Catholics, it will be in vain for us to look for any exertion, or even for a fair, unbiassed, and impartial opinion, from any individual Protestant. . . . When you have distinctly explained to such gentlemen as you may send to for that purpose the designs and wishes of the Government, you may then require their sentiments on the subject of resistance, and you may state to them *that the further steps to be taken must depend upon them*; that resistance will be ineffectual

unless carried on by the hearty co-operation of the Protestants; that it is for their interest you are contending; that provided the great body of the Protestants will exert themselves in the contest, you are authorised to give them the most decided and unreserved support, and make every exertion they can desire to prevent the admission of the Catholics to seats in the Legislature.

‘At the same time you will satisfy the Catholics of the liberal and conciliatory disposition entertained towards them, to give them the benefit of the concessions of ’93, so far as their conduct shall render it practicable. You will do this in the best way you can. Of measures likely to improve the condition and satisfy the minds of the Catholics, without endangering the Protestant Establishment, I submit the following, *which were the subjects of conversation with Lord Fitzwilliam before he went to Ireland*:—The establishment of seminaries for the education of Catholic priests; and the making some provision for the Catholic parochial clergy. If any mode should occur to you for facilitating the education of the lower ranks of Catholics, to put them on a par with Protestants, you may be sure of the countenance and support of the English Government. . . . I recommend these measures. . . . Should, however, your endeavours prove unsuccessful, and should you become convinced that resistance would be dangerous or ineffectual, even in that case you will not suffer the measure to proceed till you have represented to us the state of the country and the disposition of men’s minds, and till you receive further instructions from home.

‘As Lord Fitzwilliam’s retirement may be attributed in part to the distribution of official situations, I must not pass over that subject in silence. We wished to unite all parties in support of Lord Fitzwilliam; we wish to do the same in support of yourself. But I mean to be understood. The supporters of Government must do what they profess, and not be suffered to avail themselves of their supposed connection with Government to bring forward measures which have not the avowed sanction of your Lordship.

‘One caution more. You will need all your prudence. Those who fancied they were about to be sacrificed will assume airs of exultation and triumph little suited to conciliate those who have been stopped in the career which they had just entered; and the disappointment of the latter may be productive of great ill-humour and some violence. Moderate, soothe, conciliate these jarring spirits. We have great confidence in your judgment, firmness, and discretion.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Instructions to Lord Camden, March 10, 1795. S.P.O.

## SECTION V.

PELHAM was despatched first to prepare the way for  
 1795 Camden. At Holyhead he met Lord Milton, who  
 refused to see him. From gentlemen who had  
 crossed in the same packet he learned that Fitzwilliam  
 ‘was unwell and much agitated,’ and that public opinion  
 in Dublin, though not in favour of the Catholics, was  
 ‘against the Beresfords.’ In the objection to the  
 replacement of John Beresford at the head of the  
 Board of Revenue, Pelham himself sympathised.<sup>1</sup>

On landing in Dublin he sent a polite note to  
 Fitzwilliam, who declined, however, all communication  
 with him, and sailed the next day. The people drew  
 the carriage of the departing Viceroy through the  
 streets to the water-side. The shops were closed.  
 The houses were hung with mourning. Before his

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<sup>1</sup> He explained his reasons in a note written from Holyhead to the Duke of Portland:—

‘If it should take that turn, and sacrifices are necessary, Pitt must submit to Beresford’s removal. I am sorry to say it, but I must, on such a critical occasion, express my feeling that Pitt seems more animated about men on this occasion than he ought to be. I was by no means satisfied with his conduct about Beresford when I met him at his house with Lord Camden. I

cannot boldly defend a job, even in Ireland. The peace of Ireland is too great a stake to set against the interest of any *clique*. If once the notion of a trick is entertained, our task will be a difficult one, for nothing so excites discontent, and so soon drives the common people into acts of violence and despair, as the notion of having been imposed upon.’—‘Pelham to the Duke of Portland, March 22, 1795.’  
 S. P. O.

departure Fitzwilliam published his own defence in the shape of two letters to Lord Carlisle, in which he described himself as a sacrifice to a change of policy in the Cabinet, whom he accused of manœuvring for a union, and quoted as proof a passage from a secret despatch of the Duke of Portland.<sup>1</sup>

Fitzgibbon asked Pelham plainly if he was to understand that the suspicion was well founded. Pelham for himself denied it. He had the strongest objection to a union, he said, on account of the effect which the Irish members might produce on the British Parliament. If that was so, Fitzgibbon said, Lord Camden would do well to remove public anxiety by an explicit declaration on meeting Parliament.

Pelham had, of course, much to hear. He learnt how artificially the Emancipation question had been forced by Grattan's agitation. The Catholics, 'if they had not been invited to come forward, were very willing to have remained quiet.' He was shown an inflammatory letter from Burke declaring that the

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<sup>1</sup> 'The letters were distributed among Lord Fitzwilliam's friends, and are now in general circulation. One passage is much talked of here. It is a quotation from a confidential despatch from your Grace, in which you say that deferring this question would be the means of doing a greater service to the British empire than it has been capable of receiving since the Re-

volution. The construction put on these words by many people (though falsely in my opinion) is that the intention of ministers was to keep the Catholic question alive, and in suspense, till a peace, and then employ it as a means of forming a union between the two countries.'—'Pelham to the Duke of Portland, March 30. Secret.' S.P.O.



Catholics must have Emancipation, that Parliament would be disgraced by postponing it, and that England some day would gain popularity at the Protestants' expense by promoting it.

'The evil of all this,' said Pelham, 'is the general mistrust of English Government, and the advantage given to the disaffected, who represent the connection with Great Britain as the source of all the evils that attend the country . . . The people have been brought forward so often as the instrument of intimidation, and the Government has yielded so readily, that they naturally think that they have an adverse interest, and that they have the means of carrying anything.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord Camden followed in a week. He landed at Blackrock on the 31st of March. The streets were quiet as he entered Dublin. At the Castle he was sworn in as usual by the Lords Justices. His arrival became known during the ceremony, and as the Lords Justices drove away when it was over they were received at the gates by a dense and angry crowd. Stones were thrown at the Primate's carriage. Fitzgibbon, who was an object of far more serious hatred, was attacked by a knot of well-dressed, dangerous-looking men, who evidently meant mischief. The coachman lashed his horses and broke through them. They made for his house in Ely Place by a short cut, and were there before him.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pelham to the Duke of Portland, April 6.' S.P.O.

As he drove up heavy paving-stones were flung through the carriage window, one of which struck the Chancellor on the forehead. Passers-by, or the police, whom Grattan had not yet extinguished, gathered round and protected him from further mischief. The mob surged off and attacked the Speaker's house and the Custom House. They were at last fired on by the troops. Two were killed, and the rest sullenly dispersed. It was an ominous reception. The revolutionary politicians, disappointed in their hope of obtaining their object through the imbecility of the English Government, evidently intended to show that if not conceded they meant to take it.

Keogh and Byrne returned from London to report that they had gone on a bootless errand. Keogh, finding that plausibility and smooth speeches would serve his turn no longer, rose to the height which Wolfe Tone desired, and declared in the Catholic Committee that Ireland must now be roused to assert her rights. The Protestant peers and country gentlemen, on the other hand, gave Camden the assurance which Portland instructed him to demand of them, and promised their cordial co-operation in resisting further encroachments.

The ground being thus cleared, and the first effects of the shock having passed off, the suspended session recommenced. Lord Camden was not allowed to give the corresponding assurance which Fitzgibbon desired. The Union, in fact, was, and long had been

Pitt's object; the Cabinet agreed with him; and Camden, if not Pelham, was in the secret.<sup>1</sup>

Grattan, as the father of the independence of the Irish Parliament, came again to the front. The victory had been snatched from him at the moment when he believed it won. He saw his country again about to relapse under a regimen like Lord Westmoreland's. He rose on the 21st of April to move for a committee to inquire into the state of the nation, and to deprecate the return of 'the pernicious and profligate system' which had made Ireland a disgrace before the world. He had been reproached with the violence of his language in replying to the address of the Catholic Committee. He protested that he had said nothing 'so blasted as the horrid declaration, worthy of the corrupt lips of a herald of profligacy, that certain parliamentary provisions were defensible or expedient to purchase the members of the House.' He reasserted that the recall of Fitzwilliam was a dagger planted in the Irish heart. He stood in his place to meet inquiry and confront his enemies.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The arguments in Mr. Pelham's letter,' Portland wrote to the Viceroy, 'biassed the opinions of the Cabinet against his making any speech at all.' The Duke said he was prepared for the construction which would be placed upon his words. The Secretary must neither avow nor disavow it. The private correspondence between

men in public employment ought to be kept religiously secret, and Mr. Pelham was not to allow himself to be betrayed into explanations. He was rather 'to enter his solemn protest, once for all, against any reference to information of so delicate and sacred a nature.'—'Portland to Camden, April 13. Private and secret.' S.P.O.

The mob in the galleries applauded, but the House, relieved from fear of Pitt, had regained its courage. Mervyn Archdall said calmly that Lord Westmoreland had done more for Ireland than all the Viceroys from Strafford to Fitzwilliam. With robust sense he denounced the word Emancipation as applicable to the Catholics. 'Emancipation meant that a slave was set free. The Catholics were not slaves. Nothing more absurd had ever been said since language had been abused for the delusion of mankind.'

Forcing a division, Mr. Grattan found himself in a minority of more than a hundred. On the 24th Pelham introduced a proposal for the establishment of a Catholic College. It was opposed by the Patriots, partly because it might allay the sense of disappointment which they desired to exasperate — partly as tending to divide the Catholics and Protestants, whom they wished to combine.<sup>1</sup> The Government carried

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<sup>1</sup> 'Grattan presented a petition in opposition "from his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects of Ireland." He sets forth "the inexpediency of establishing an educational institution from which Protestants should be excluded, inasmuch as it tended to perpetuate the line of religious separation."

'Strongly advocating mixed education, the petitioners said, that "when the youth of both religions were instructed together in the branches of education which were common to all, their peculiar tenets

would afterwards be no hindrance to a friendly intercourse in life." The Catholics, having been already admitted to Trinity College, "saw with deep concern the principles of separation and exclusion revived and re-enacted." — *Parliamentary Debates*, April 29, 1795.

This petition has been sometimes referred to as an evidence of the presence of large-minded and liberal sentiment in a part of the Catholics of Ireland at the end of the last century. The Catholic spirit is no doubt more modest and

their point without difficulty, and an Act was passed for the foundation and endowment of a Catholic Academy, which has since become known as Maynooth.<sup>1</sup>

The battle had still to be fought over the Emancipation Bill. Grattan had announced that he should persist with it. It had been read a first time on the 24th of April without opposition, as the Cabinet had directed. On the 4th of May it came on a second time. The debate lasted through a long May day, through the night, and till ten o'clock the following morning. The arguments of the advocates and the opponents, with the light on them of eighty years' experience, can still be read without fatigue.

'History,' said the Solicitor-General (Toler), in rising to move the rejection of the Bill, 'shows that we cannot allow an *imperium in imperio* or that rival and sovereign authority which the Roman Catholic Church claims, and wherever it has power will assert. It has cost us dear to shake off that power. I will not open the door for its return. The better sort of Catholics have not lent themselves to this agitation.

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tolerant when held in subjection, and becomes arrogant and encroaching when indulged. But this petition, and Grattan's connection with it, had nothing to do with liberal sentiment.

The hope of the party of revolution was the combination of Catholics and Protestants. The aim of England was to prevent the com-

bination from being accomplished. The motion for the establishment of the college, on one side, and for the opposition to it on the other, were both exclusively political.

<sup>1</sup> 35 George III. cap. 21. The original design was for the education of lay students as well as priests.

Others, not they, have raised an outcry which has produced outrage in the remotest corners of Ireland; and has inflamed the peasantry, who have been taught to think that Emancipation means the lowering of the price of land. The United Irishmen are the managers of the Catholic cause. Their publications are bound up with those of the Catholic Committee. They appeared, armed with the insignia of rebellion, parading the streets of Dublin. Nothing less than rebellion was hatching, and their plan has ended in the fate of that man who was buried yesterday<sup>1</sup> with all the honours of high treason, attended by the leaders of that society. I trust the gentlemen of Ireland will prove that they are not affected by lies and clamour, and that when the Constitution is attacked they will say with the bold Barons, "*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.*"

Mr. Grattan had spoken brilliantly as usual, but with more than usual gesticulation and violence, foretelling the ruin of all things if the Bill was rejected. Dr. Duigenan, in replying, drew a valuable picture of Grattan's person and manner in debate.

'When,' he said, 'I see a gentleman equal as an actor to Garrick, Barry, or Sheridan get up in this House, horror and dismay in his countenance, his hair standing on end, and hear him conjuring up all the hideous spirits of battle, murder, and sudden

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jackson was kept in prison for a year, and had but just been tried.

death as the consequences of rejection—in solemn tones, from the lowest key of his voice, as if he was enclosed in a hogshead and was speaking through the bung-hole—though I admire his ability in acting, yet am I in no way terrified by the unsubstantial goblins he has conjured up.’

‘Admit the Catholics,’ said Pelham, ‘and you cannot stop. For myself, I am free to say if Parliament becomes Catholic, the Church Establishment ought to be of the same persuasion. The Bill, if carried, must weaken the connection between England and this country; and if it have that tendency—I am not speaking for Protestants, but for mankind—to whom is Europe to look for liberty at the present crisis but to the protection and power of Great Britain?’

Mr. Cuffe inquired what benefit had been derived from the concessions made already. The Bill of '93 was followed by the alliance of the Catholics and Republicans. Those who formerly came to them as suppliants came now as swaggering bullies.

Sir Edward Newenham said, like Sir Robert Peel after him, that ‘religious equality in Ireland was impossible. There must be either a Popish ascendancy or a Protestant ascendancy. . As little could the Ethiopian be washed white as the Church of Rome taught to endure an equal in power.’

Sir Hercules Langrishe, on the other hand, maintained, in modern style, ‘that the days of restraint were passed.’ ‘Reason, persuasion, benevolence,

extinction of prejudices, were the weapons which should now be relied on. The Pope was an inoffensive, unaspiring prince, defending himself feebly against French infidelity. That the British connection would be endangered by the admission of the Catholics to the Constitution was a dream.'

'Adopt the measure,' argued Sir George Knox, 'and we shall liberalise the Catholic gentry. They will see that their property, their liberty, their lives, depend on the connection with Great Britain. The Catholic gentleman is not so silly or so light as to sacrifice the Constitution to a few ignorant priests. Rather taking in view the spirit of the times, the Catholic gentlemen, already more than half Protestants, will bring up their children to a conformity which opens to them the profits of the Church.'

'Where is the Papal power?' asked Mr. Osborne. 'Does a shadow of it exist to give hope to the greatest bigot of the Popish persuasion, or alarm to the greatest bigot of ours?'

George Ponsonby accused the Protestant speakers of charging the Catholics with opinions which no man in his senses could entertain. The Catholics did not think Protestants would be damned for not belonging to the Church. Dr. Troy<sup>1</sup> didn't think so. Dr. Troy knew well he would as soon be damned for riding on horseback. 'The Pope! Were they afraid of the Pope? The Pope was the only man in Europe of

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<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.



whom no one was afraid, and who was afraid of everybody.'

Narrow-minded Protestant prejudice was keener-sighted than modern enlightenment. Grattan, too, was as far astray as Ponsonby; not, indeed, blinded like his friend, by the flatulent conceit of liberalism, but by the instinctive and indelible longing of an Irish patriot for the humiliation of Great Britain.

'The English Ministers,' he said scornfully, 'oppose this Bill.' 'Will they, after losing Holland, losing Brabant, losing a great part of Germany, losing the terrors of the British name—will they reject the Catholics of Ireland? Will they, after losing America, with an increase of debt of two hundred millions, with a new Republican empire rising upon them—dreadful from its principles, its power, and its victories—will they reject the Catholics of Ireland? Have they left themselves room for internal proscription, for eternal persecution, for tyranny under the mask of religion? Have they left enough of territories to proscribe three-fourths of this island, and a fourth of their empire? To what allies have the Ministry resorted, that they would exclude the Irish Catholics? Are not their armies mostly Catholic? Is not your militia mostly Catholic? Is not a good portion of their seamen Catholic? Are not the confederate princes Catholic?'

The debate excited little interest out of doors. The agitators knew that the Bill would be lost, and, with a spirit which revealed the value of their protests of loyalty, were already busy with other and darker

methods.<sup>1</sup> The usual crowd was absent from the galleries. No angry mob thronged the doors of the Parliament House. Still speaker followed speaker, as if every member desired to relieve himself of the burden of his emotions. Curran rose at six in the morning, with the May sun shining through the windows on the weary assembly. Sir John Blaquiere spoke at ten. The Attorney-General wound up the discussion with a few vigorous words, and the question of Catholic Emancipation was dismissed from the Irish Parliament, to be raised again as opportunity offered for purposes of faction, but never more with serious prospect of acceptance, as long as Ireland had a separate constitution.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, May 5.

## SECTION VI.

REBELLION was now merely a question of time, and under one condition might become seriously formidable. The Northern Presbyterians had not revenged themselves on extortionate landlords and insolent churchmen by house-burning and midnight murder. They had none the less resented the distrust which had deprived them of their civil rights, and the rapacity which had stolen the profits of their industry. They had been American in the war of Independence. They had made the strength of the Volunteers, and at the outset the same instinct had led them to sympathise with the French Revolution. Could Wolfe Tone make his alliance a reality, could the artisans and farmers of Antrim and Down and Londonderry be induced as a body to combine in earnest with the disaffected Catholics, the tenure of the Administration at the Castle might be precarious indeed. At one time the union appeared to have been completed, but the phenomena of 1641 were repeating themselves. The Ulster Puritans had then combined with the Papal Irish against Strafford and the Bishops. In 1792 they were inclining to protect themselves by a similar alliance against Lord Donegal and his imitators. From the first, however, there had been a counter-movement, which gained strength as the Catholics became more violent. Protestant Ireland had not yet forgotten the scenes in which the agitation of 1641

concluded. The Scotch-Irish of Ulster traced their blood to the defenders of Derry. Bitter as they might be against landlord oppression, they had a more immediate quarrel with the Catholic tenants who had been intruded into the Antrim farms over the heads of so many of themselves. The spread of Defenderism and the eagerness of the Catholics to obtain arms aggravated their suspicions, and the devilish ferocity of the mutilators of the Barclay family had already determined the best of them to shut their ears to the United Irishmen, and refuse to help forward an insurrection which was too likely to turn, like its predecessors, into universal massacre. The effects of the recall of Fitzwilliam in the Catholic provinces were more alarming. The Defenders, who were all Catholics, fell back into open defiance. Defender lodges were formed in every county in the island, and the Catholic peasantry were universally sworn in. The blacksmiths went to work to hammer pikes. Private houses were again entered in search of guns and muskets. Two thousand stand of arms were taken in Roscommon alone. In Longford in eight months there were one hundred and fifty-seven robberies and murders. Stray parties of militia were set upon and plundered. A revenue officer and nine men were waylaid and killed, and the bodies were horribly mutilated.<sup>1</sup> A deadly and determined spirit

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pelham to the Duke of forwarded by Lord Camden, May, Portland, April 27.' 'Account of 1795.' S.P.O.  
the insurrection in Roscommon,

was silently spreading, to which even the well-affected did not dare to refuse obedience. Servants left their places with tears in their eyes, telling their employers they were afraid to remain with them.

These symptoms were frightfully suggestive. The massacre of 1641 had not yet been resolved into a legend by steady lying and sentimental credulity. It remained in the memory of every Irish Protestant a definite and dreadful fact, which might recur if opportunity served; in Armagh and Antrim especially, the small Protestant farmers combined, in fear and exasperation, to disarm the Catholics settled among themselves; and at last, when nothing else would serve, to expel them out of Ulster and force them to return into the South. The friends of liberty made the air ring with eloquent shrieks. Protestant girls might be ravished. Protestant farmers and gentry might be murdered. No matter. It was but punishment overtaking tyranny. When a Catholic was injured by a Protestant, the very heart of humanity was invited to bleed. To such persons it did not occur to inquire why the Catholics, who were forbidden to possess arms, were in such haste to obtain them. But the question occurred very strongly to the Protestants, in the midst of whom these persons were living. When they found that they were confronted with a conspiracy which was enveloping the island, they resolved naturally that they would not be caught sleeping a second time. If they were rough, violent, and unscrupulous, the blame lay most

with those who had brought Ireland into incipient insurrection.

Such a temper was a formidable obstacle to Wolfe Tone and his friends. They could carry with them the city mob at Belfast, but Jacobin clerks and shopboys were poor creatures beside the rugged and determined countrymen. Many an effort had been made to compose the feud between the two wings of the intended army of insurrection. After two years of exertion, Tone believed that he had accomplished his object. On the 18th of September a peace was formally signed at Portadown between the Peep-of-Day Boys and the Defenders, and the hatchet was apparently buried. But the incongruous elements were drawn together only for a more violent recoil. The very same day, Mr. Atkinson, one of the Protestant subscribers, was shot at. The day following, a party of Protestants were waylaid and beaten. On the 21st both parties collected in force, and at a village in Tyrone, from which the event took the name by which it is known, was fought the battle of the Diamond. The Protestants won the day, though far outnumbered. Eight-and-forty Defenders were left dead on the field, and the same evening was established the first lodge of an institution which was to gather into it in succeeding years all that was best and noblest in Ireland. The name of Orangemen had long existed. It had been used by loyal Protestants to designate those who adhered most faithfully to the principles of 1688. Threatened now with a general

Catholic insurrection, with the Executive authority powerless, and determined, at all events, not to offer the throats of themselves and their families to the Catholic knife, they formed into a volunteer police to prevent murder, to see the law put in force which forbade the Catholics to be armed, and to awe into submission the roving bands of assassins who were scaring sleep from the bedside of every Protestant household. They became the abhorrence of traitors, whose designs they thwarted. The Government looked askance at a body of men who interfered with the time-honoured policy of overcoming sedition by tenderness and softness of speech.<sup>1</sup> But the lodges grew and multiplied. Honest men of all ranks sought admission to them as into spontaneous vigilance committees to supply the place of the constabulary which ought to have existed, but did not; and if they did their work with some roughness and irregularity, the work nevertheless was done. By the spring of 1797, they could place twenty thousand men at the disposition of the authorities. In 1798 they filled

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Camden took the most unfavourable view of the Orangemen:—

‘A spirit of another kind,’ he said, ‘has manifested itself in Armagh. The Protestants in that county, finding themselves the most numerous, have been induced to commit acts of the greatest outrage and barbarity against their Catholic neighbours; and, notwithstanding

the exertions of Government, the disturbances neither have ceased nor diminished. This has been owing to the magistrates in that county having imbibed the prejudices which belong to it. I have sent Colonel Cradock there, for the suppression of outrage and disorder, from whatever quarter it may arise.—To Portland, January 22, 1796.’ S.P.O

the ranks of the yeomanry; beyond all other influences the Orange organization counteracted and thwarted the progress of the United Irishmen in Ulster, and when the moment of danger arrived it had broken the right arm of insurrection.



## BOOK IX.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE FRENCH AT BANTRY.

## SECTION I.

**T**HERE are persons who believe that, if the King had not interfered with Lord Fitzwilliam, the Irish Catholics would have accepted gratefully the religious equality which he was prepared to offer them, and would have remained thenceforward for all time contented citizens of the British Empire. There are those also who say that if Fitzwilliam had not been sent to give them encouragement, they would not have entertained the hopes the disappointment of which drove them into rebellion. To the careful student of Irish history these positions are alike incredible. The Catholic cannot be content with equality when he can command ascendancy; the Irish patriot sets his heart on separation from England, and values political concessions only as advancing his parallels nearer to the citadel which he means to storm; and though Fitzwilliam may have precipitated the crisis,

a convulsion became inevitable from the moment that England allowed the Catholics of Ireland to see that she was afraid of them. Humble and even abject so long as she dared assert her strength, they pressed on her, when they saw that she was flinching, with menace and intimidation; and as no English statesman could allow himself to contemplate an Ireland really independent as a possibility, the alternative was either to postpone the collision by successive retreats till the Catholics held the powers of the State, with a Parliament of their own to represent them in the final struggle, or to resist at once while the authority was still in Protestant hands and the Protestant party in the country remained unbroken. The Cabinet, with a European war upon their hands, and themselves embarrassed with the new theories of constitutional liberty, preferred the first. The King, governed by what are called prejudices, adhered to conclusions formed by intelligent statesmen of past generations, and based on the experience of centuries. It was too late to prevent a rebellion, not too late, however, to prevent it from assuming the dimensions of 1641 or 1690.

Had the Catholic Committee been wise in their generation, they would have concealed the hollowness of those professions of loyalty on which they had demanded admission to the constitution. They made haste, as if on purpose, to show how correctly George the Third had estimated their character. The Catholic bishops and peers retired from the front, affecting to deprecate consequences which they could no longer

avert. The revolutionary part of the committee gave their hands finally to Wolfe Tone and his Jacobin confederates; the two armies, the Catholic Defenders and the 'National Guards' of Belfast and Dublin, were amalgamated into a common force, and the cause of Catholic Ireland became the cause of France and liberty.

The Catholic Committee met for the last time to hear the report of its delegates from England. In the speeches on that occasion, which were published in the Catholic newspapers,<sup>1</sup> the war of England against France was described as an impious conspiracy against freedom, and the Irish soldiers and sailors in the Crown service were invited to desert their colours. The victories of England were described as public calamities at which Irishmen should rather weep than rejoice. Keogh informed the committee that it would meet no more as a separate body. The Catholics were identified thenceforward with the Protestants of Belfast, and their common action would be guided by a common directory.

The first essential was to inform France that Ireland was at her service. Jackson, the French emissary, was buried with public honours. Wolfe Tone, the genius of Irish revolution, came again out of obscurity to the front. After the apparent satisfaction with which the Catholics had accepted the concessions of '93, Wolfe Tone had despaired of them

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<sup>1</sup> See the speech of Dr. Duigenan, May 3, 1795.—*Irish Debates*.

and despaired of his country. He had been cautious of committing himself with Jackson, whom he suspected to be an emissary of Pitt. On Rowan's flight he went to Beresford, told him what he knew, and declared with ingenious plausibility that, though as an Irishman he considered that he had a right to desire the emancipation of his country, he regarded Englishmen who took their part as traitors, and would have nothing to do with them. Talk of this kind would not have served his purpose could the Government have made a case to prosecute him. But they found that, even if they admitted Jackson as an approver, they could not make sure of convicting Tone. The Attorney-General, Wolfe, who was perhaps his kinsman, befriended him; and as he had confessedly taken up with rebellion out of resentment for personal neglect, there was a thought at one time 'of giving him some employment in the East Indies out of reach of European politics.' Like all Irish patriots, he would have accepted greedily any tolerable appointment from the Government which he had been execrating. But they changed their minds. They allowed him, as he said, 'to withdraw his head, like the crane in the fable, from the jaws of the wolf.' They spared him prosecution, and they accepted an easy promise from him to go to America at his early convenience. He lingered on to see the issue of Jackson's trial. Had Fitzwilliam remained in office, his connection with Jackson would have been forgotten, and he would perhaps have been taken into employ-

ment at home.<sup>1</sup> On Fitzwilliam's fall, prudence called on him to depart, and, as events were turning out, his journey could be made supremely opportune. He had bound himself to go to America. He had not undertaken to remain there. He proposed to his friends, Keogh and McCormick, that from America he should return at once to Paris, and invite the Directory to send a force for their deliverance.

'I received, as I expected,' he said, 'the most cordial approbation. They both laid the most positive injunctions upon me to leave nothing unattempted on my part to force my way to France and lay our situation before the Government, observing that if I succeeded there was nothing in the power of my country to bestow to which I might not fairly pretend.'<sup>2</sup>

Empowered to speak as he conceived in the name of Catholics, Dissenters, and Defenders, he undertook his memorable mission. Before his departure he spent a month with his United friends at Belfast—Russell, Neilson, the two Simms's, and other enthusiasts now radiant with hope. Each day in the bright May weather they had some fête or banquet in anticipa-

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<sup>1</sup> He says that overtures were made to him, but that he declined to connect himself with a party whom he mistrusted. 'The Whigs,' he adds, 'were angry at his refusal, and might have been inclined to win credit for their moderation by making a victim of a Republican

leader.' George Ponsonby, who expected to succeed Wolfe, said, 'Perhaps Mr. Tone will not find the next Attorney-General so accommodating as the last.'

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of Wolfe Tone, by Himself.*

tion of approaching deliverance. Finally, at MacArts Fort, on Cave Hill, the whole party swore an oath together never to desist from their efforts till they had subverted the authority of England, and had made their country independent.

## SECTION II.

MEANWHILE the word had gone out among the Defenders to resume work and secure the arms of the <sup>1795</sup> Protestant gentry. First in Connaught, and then gradually in all parts of Ireland, bodies of men, who seemed to have started out of the earth, were out at night on the prowl like wild beasts. Houses were burnt, cattle were houghed with the peculiar ferocity which characterises the Irish peasants when roused to violence; the udders of the cows belonging to Protestants were sliced off. When arms were demanded and were not delivered, death was the punishment. Barracks were surprised in the darkness. Parties of militia were attacked even in open day with desperate courage; and by whom these deeds were done remained for the most part a mystery. In every cabin the grown men were sworn to secrecy, and to be true to their country and to France, and instant and dreadful justice overtook the miserable wretch who was suspected of having broken his oath.

Notwithstanding this precaution, the veil was in places lifted. General Luttrell, now Lord Carhampton, went down and took command in Connaught. Informers offered their services, provided their presence was not required in the witness-box. A priest named Phillips 'caused himself to be made a Defender with

a view of giving information.’<sup>1</sup> Others came ‘whose names the Viceroy dared not place on paper.’ With the help of these men Carhampton was able to arrest many of the Connaught leaders; and, legal trials being from the nature of the case impossible, he trusted to Parliament for an Act of Indemnity, and sent them by scores to serve in the fleet. Thus, amidst the shrieks of patriots and threats of prosecution, he succeeded in restoring some outward show of order.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit, however, was repressed in one district only to break out in others under the auspices of the new organisation in which Defenders and United Irishmen were now combining. The Committee of Public Welfare, which had taken the direction of Irish disaffection, consisted of five members continually changing, whose names were known only to themselves, and to those through whom their orders were immediately transmitted. They had no fixed place of

<sup>1</sup> ‘Camden to Portland, July 29, 1795.’

<sup>2</sup> ‘Among the secret informations are several curious accounts of the organisation of the Defenders. Their central lodge was at Armagh, with lodges affiliated through the four provinces. They were all Catholics, yet Jacobins or Fifth Monarchy men, believing that “all men were equal, and that there was no King but the Almighty.” The immediate object was a union between Ireland and France. The “Cavan Catechism” ran:—

“The French Defenders will uphold the cause;

The Irish Defenders will pull down the British laws.”

‘Another Catechism was found on a man who was hanged at Carrick:—“Are you concerned?—I am. To what?—To the National Convention. What do you design by that cause?—To quell all nations, dethrone all kings, and plant the true religion that was lost at the Reformation. Who sent you?—Simon Peter, the Head of the Church.”’ — *Irish MSS.* 1795. S.P.O.



meeting. They assembled once a month, sometimes at Belfast, sometimes at Dublin, to hear reports, draw resolutions, and issue commands. Below the General Committee were the County Committees. Below the County Committees were Baronial Committees. Below the Baronial Committees were the Elementary Societies, each containing eighteen members and no more, one or more of whom were to be found in every town in Ireland, and at last in every village. Each eighteen had its four officers, changed every fortnight, and elected by lot. Each single member contributed a shilling a month or more according to his means. They appeared under the most innocent disguises, as book clubs, parochial charity clubs, or trading societies; and so swiftly the infection spread through the poisoned atmosphere, that before the end of the summer of 1795 Lord Camden was informed that more than a million members were already sworn.<sup>1</sup> The militia were enrolled to overawe them; but the militia, being themselves chiefly Catholics, were objects of assiduous and generally successful seduction. The weavers and tradesmen of Dublin 'were indefatigable' in their attempts on the loyalty of the Irish in the regiments of the line; and so energetic was the propagandism, that in August the more sanguine leaders

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<sup>1</sup> This must have been an enormous exaggeration. The population of Ireland at this time was estimated at 4,100,000, of whom three millions were Catholics. The number, however, did at last reach half a million, and included almost every able-bodied Catholic in Ireland.

believed that they were ready for revolt, and a plot was laid which resembled singularly the precedent of 1641. The day selected was the ominous 23rd of August. Dublin Castle was to be surprised. Companies of the two regiments on duty there, the 104th and 111th, had been gained over. The signal was to be an attack on the guard on Essex Bridge and the seizure of the colours. Camden was to be killed by the first means that came to hand. Fitzgibbon was to be hanged in state on St. Stephen's Green; the Protestants, according to the ambitious instincts of the Catholics, who were already outrunning their leaders, were to be driven out of the island or destroyed. The purpose was betrayed by secret informers, who were never wanting in Ireland. Half-a-dozen of the conspirators were arrested, one of them a private in the Guards. The incriminated companies mutinied. The most guilty deserted, disappeared in the city lanes, and were heard of no more. Similar disaffection showed itself in a regiment at Cork, but was promptly quelled. In September Lord Camden made a progress in force through the South. One of the O'Connors had been convicted of administering the United oath to a soldier in the garrison at Naas. O'Connor was hanged while Camden was in the town; and to produce an effect his head was struck off and set up on a pole over the door of the gaol.<sup>1</sup>

It availed nothing. Insurrection did not gather to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to the Duke of Portland, September 9, 1795.'

a head, but the elements of it were everywhere. Magistrates were waylaid, witnesses were murdered, constables who had been too busy, beaten, piked, or brained. The militia could not be trusted. The regular army was scarcely in a better condition; and, though its numbers were increased on paper, was so feeble as to tempt rebellion. The best troops had been sent abroad. Their places had been supplied by invalids and Fencible regiments, and even of these, instead of the 20,000 voted by Parliament, there were but 10,000 in all Ireland. The country gentlemen, so forward ten years before in volunteering to overawe the English, were hanging back and 'hedging' against the day of evil. 'Since the Roman Catholics were allowed to vote,' Camden bitterly said, 'the gentry canvass for their support at the expense of the tranquillity of the kingdom.' 'Feudal notions were passing away. The rights of man were growing up instead of them; and the people, having seen England more than once yield to intimidation, were encouraged to persevere in agitation by experience of its success.'<sup>1</sup>

At the end of September there was a second alarm. The Castle was warned that an order had gone out for every Defender and United Irishman to rise on a specified night under pain of death. Often, doubtless, such stories were invented to mislead and harass. The present informer was telling nothing but the truth.

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\* 'Camden to Portland, September 25, 1795.' S.P.O.

Tone's friend, Russell, excited, perhaps, by the oath at MacArts fort, had urged a universal insurrection immediately after harvest. He had been hardly restrained by his more prudent companions,<sup>1</sup> and Keogh wrote to America to Tone to hasten his movements.<sup>2</sup>

The Cabinet, when post after post brought in these gloomy reports, regretted, it is likely, the King's obstinacy, which had brought trouble in their day, which but for him they might have passed on to their successors. Portland confessed inability to suggest a method by which the spirit which had been let loose could be re-chained.

'Were the country gentlemen,' he wrote, 'or rather were the great landed proprietors—an event impossible to take place—to reside on their estates, were the parochial clergy more numerous or more generally resident, were the gentlemen more active, the provincial magistracy better filled, the duties of it discharged with impartiality, and the police establishment made general through Ireland, were the wages of the labourers better regulated and paid in specie, were the lands so occupied as to give the landlord an influence over the farmer, and the farmer an interest in the goodwill of the proprietor of the estate, then much might be done for the improvement of the kingdom and the happiness of its inhabitants.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> '— to Wolfe Tone, September 21, 1795.'—Printed in Tone's *Memoirs*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Keogh to Wolfe Tone, September 3.'—*Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> 'Portland to Camden, October 13.' S.P.O.

Admirable Duke of Portland, sitting in his chair with his hands folded and mourning over what he called impossibilities, never remembering, even in his dreams, that it was the business of him and the other Ministers of the crown to make these 'impossibilities' into facts, that the secret of all Ireland's disorders was the shameful and scandalous forgetfulness of duty on the part of every person in the empire connected with the management of it, from the sovereigns who had quartered their mistresses on the Irish revenue to the lowest customs officer, who contrived to be sick in his bed when the Kerry smuggler landed his cargo.

## SECTION III.

TIMES were changed since the Viceroys looked with dread to the meeting of Parliament, uneasily counted their resources and compared them with <sup>1796</sup> the expectant pack whose voracity they must satisfy or look for a Short Supply Bill. Tamed out of their patriotism by the unpleasant outcome of it, which now threatened their estates and even their lives, the Irish Members assembled at the beginning of 1796 with but one desire, to strengthen the hands of the Executive. Lord Camden, in opening the session, dwelt naturally on the treasonable organisation which was overspreading the island. Grattan tried, as usual, an amendment on the Address, but he was listened to with impatience, and voted down with emphasis. The House wanted to hear how Government proposed to deal with the United Irishmen.

The Attorney-General announced that he should ask first for a Bill of Indemnity for Carhampton and the Connaught magistrates.<sup>1</sup> Further, he should

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<sup>1</sup> 'Whereas, in the year 1795 several parts of the kingdom were disturbed by treasonable insurrection, and the lives and properties of many peaceable and faithful subjects destroyed. And whereas, to preserve the public peace, magistrates and other officers have apprehended and sent suspected persons out of the kingdom, have seized arms and entered houses, and done divers acts not justifiable according to law, all suits for things done to preserve the public peace since January 1, 1795, shall be void,' &c.—36 George III. cap. 6.

introduce a Bill to repress conspiracy to murder. 'Assassination,' he said, 'had become as familiar as fowling.' Magistrates were murdered. Police were murdered. Witnesses were murdered to prevent their appearance in court, or were murdered after they had appeared, to deter others from doing the same. He proposed to give the magistrates summary power to deal with vagrants. He should invite Parliament to make the administering treasonable oaths a capital offence; and (a more considerable and most important innovation) to make the written deposition of a witness, who might be murdered after he had given it, evidence to lay before a jury. As a preliminary the Attorney-General proposed a resolution that the present power of magistrates was inadequate to the emergency. To this one voice only was raised in opposition. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, with his French wife,<sup>1</sup> were fast hastening into treason. As yet within the limits of the Constitution and in his place in Parliament, Lord Edward protested against coercion, and insisted that if grievances were removed the people would return to their allegiance.

More prudent, more plausible than Fitzgerald, Mr. Grattan made a counter-attack upon the Orangemen. 'Much,' he exclaimed, 'had been said of the Defenders, nothing of the new version of the Lord George Gordon riots, of the bigotry of the Protestant banditti,

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<sup>1</sup> Pamela, daughter of Madame de Genlis and, as was supposed, the Duke of Orleans.

who, being of the religion of the State, had with the greater audacity committed the most horrid murders, massacring in the name of God, exercising despotic powers in the name of liberty.' Curran followed, with the patriot phalanx in his rear, clamouring that 1,400 Catholic families had been expelled from their homes in Armagh.

The Government was silent. The Orangemen, however, were not undefended.

Mr. Verner, a gentleman of the incriminated county, rose to say that half the stories to which he had listened were monstrous fictions. 'The Orangemen were members of the Established Church, loyal to the King, and well-affected to the Constitution. If they had come in collision with the Catholics in Armagh, the Catholics were themselves the cause. They had been robbing Protestants of their arms; they had been assembling, in their own language, "to destroy man, woman, and child of them." Under a pretence of making peace they had fallen on the Protestants without notice. They had been beaten, and had been beaten ever since, as often as they had tried the experiment. Of those who had left the country many had been concerned in outrages, and were afraid of arrest. Others had sold their interest in their farms, and had emigrated to get cheap land in Connaught. The Orangemen had been accused of many crimes; but they had not threatened the lives of magistrates, or destroyed cattle, or burnt the houses of those who attempted to enforce the laws. In some



instances they had acted improperly, but not till they had been goaded beyond the forbearance of human nature.’<sup>1</sup>

In a country on the edge of a rebellion a society which had formed itself spontaneously in defence of the existing Constitution might naturally have expected encouragement. The Orangemen had shown no antipathy to the Catholics till the Catholics had begun to arm in the face of the law. Experience had taught the Protestants too well the probable meaning of the universal eagerness for muskets and powder among those who were forbidden to possess such things. If they had taken on themselves to enforce the law, it was because the Government was apathetic or incapable, and the Government had but to adopt the strength of the Orange Lodges lying at its feet to convert it into the most powerful instrument for the repression of disorder of all kinds. The militia were corrupt, the army feeble. Of these the United Irishmen had no fear. The Orangemen they made no secret of their fearing most deeply. Samuel Neilson, the most determined and dangerous of the United leaders, told a supposed confederate, who was a spy of the Castle, that ‘he was in far greater dread of the Orangemen than of the soldiers.’ ‘They were very powerful and very desperate.’<sup>2</sup> Had Camden boldly made the Orangemen his allies, treason would have crept back into its den and been heard of no more. Unhappily, under

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, 1796.

<sup>2</sup> Secret Information, July 30, 1796.’ S.P.O.—*Irish MSS.*

constitutional governments spontaneous loyalty is the last virtue which obtains recognition. The friend who is a friend on principle can be relied on as a forlorn hope, however coldly he may be looked upon. The supposed business of constitutional governments is not to encourage the good, but to conciliate the bad, and to conciliate them if necessary by the sacrifice of the deserving. Lord Camden, yielding to the cant of Liberalism, affected deeper indignation at the disorders of the Orangemen than at the outrages of the Catholic assassins. He admitted to Portland that if France interfered he believed Ireland to be lost. He had 19,000 militia, but he could not trust them. He knew that rebellion was intended. He knew the leaders, yet he could not act upon his evidence. He doubted whether any force which he could raise in the kingdom could be depended on; yet in the very same despatch he took credit to himself for the zeal with which he was acting 'against the party of Dissenters named Orangemen.' 'Though not aimed against the Government,' he regarded the Orange combination 'as more dangerous than direct conspiracy.' They 'justly irritated the Catholics,' he said, 'and gave a pretence to the disaffected.'<sup>1</sup>

The Orange disturbances were pleaded skilfully as

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Portland, August 6, 1796.' S.P.O. The nervous anxiety of Camden to avoid offending the Catholics was shown curiously in another instance during the session. Lord Athlone, the descendant and representative of Ginkel, had fallen into penury in Holland. George III. recommended him for a pension on the Irish Establishment, and Camden displeased the King by declining

one reason, among others, for the powers which the Attorney-General demanded. The Indemnity Bill was then passed without difficulty; after that the Assassination Bill,<sup>1</sup> and a third of still graver consequence for the better suppression of insurrections,<sup>2</sup> which, if an Act of Parliament was all that was needed, would have sufficed to restore peace. But, as Mr. Brown, of the College, observed, the thing needed was not so much new statutes as the enforcement of the laws already existing.

The Act itself was not, indeed, more severe than others which have since been found equally necessary to preserve peace in Ireland. The most singular circumstance connected with it was the surprise of the Cabinet that such a measure should be required, and the ignorance which they thus unconsciously displayed of the condition into which their weak and wavering policy had brought the unhappy country.<sup>3</sup> Pelham

to propose Lord Athlone's name. He thus defends himself to Portland:—

'I will not conceal from your Grace that political considerations influenced my opinion. The very nature of the grant, and the reason for it, are so connected with the Protestant cause in this kingdom, that, although I personally wished to show, not only every attention, but every liberality towards those who supported it then, as much as I do every encouragement to those who support it now, I yet thought that in a session where so much useful unanimity has been shown,

when the Catholic question appeared to be asleep, it was not wise to bring forward a measure which might have the appearance of a degree of triumph on the subject.' —'To Portland, March 8, 1796.' S.P.O.

<sup>1</sup> 36 George III. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, cap. 20.

<sup>3</sup> 'Of your Insurrection Act I will only say, that although the necessity of such a measure is but too well established by the facility of its passage through Parliament, my astonishment at the existence of such a necessity in a country enjoying the same form of govern-

replied, with not unjust irritation, 'that the need of the measure could be doubted by no one who had read the accounts of the machinations of the United Irishmen, the Catholic Committee, and the other disturbers of the peace, which had been transmitted by the Viceroy.' 'It is the universal opinion in Ireland,' he said, 'that if this Bill does not restore peace and give the laws and the Constitution the necessary strength, we must have recourse to the sword.'<sup>1</sup>

The Act shared the fate of most other Acts in Ireland, and remained 'an absolute dead letter.'<sup>2</sup> The magistrates had received ample authority, but they had not received, for the most part, either the courage or the will to use it. The Parliament separated when it had done its work in passing the statutes. The effect of the session was only to define more clearly the position of parties and individuals, and to show every one that to the sword the appeal must be made. The executive council of the United Irishmen retorted with a published defiance. Since Parliament had been pleased to threaten with death those who combined for 'the virtuous and honourable purpose of liberating their country,' they held themselves absolved from their allegiance. The revolutionists of 1688 had called in the aid of a foreign Republic to liberate them from their oppressors. 'A more mighty republic had

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ment as this is not abated by the event.' — 'Portland to Camden, March 24.' S.P.O. | 31.' S.P.O.

| <sup>2</sup> Report of the secret committee of the House of Commons,

<sup>1</sup> 'Pelham to Portland, March 1798.

now arisen, to be the universal friend of struggling and suffering nations, and to this they would appeal.<sup>1</sup> Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor took the United Irishmen's oath, passed at once to the front rank of the society, and independent of Tone, of whose mission they knew nothing, they assumed for themselves the office of ambassadors, and undertook to open an immediate negotiation with the Directory. O'Connor had been Sheriff of Cork in 1791. He was nephew and heir-expectant of Lord Longueville, and had been personally intimate with Erskine, Grey, Sheridan, the Duke of Norfolk, Lord John Russell, and Fox. The brother of the Duke of Leinster, and the friend of the great English Whigs, were persons to whom credence would be given, and who might be assumed to speak with authority. Lord Edward had a house at Hamburg, where Pamela usually resided. Through Pamela he corresponded with the many friends which he possessed in Paris. There was nothing to excite suspicion in his going over to join his wife, or in his taking his friend along with him. From Hamburg they went privately to Switzerland, where Hoche met them by appointment; and the negotiation having been already set in train, as will be presently seen, by Wolfe Tone, Hoche held out hopes to them that France would take up Ireland's cause—that, in fact, he would himself at no distant time attempt a landing there.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Resolution of the executive council of United Irishmen. Summary of 1796.'—*Plowden*, vol. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the secret committee of the House of Lords, 1798.

This secret was well kept. Serious ground as there was for suspecting both Lord Edward and O'Connor, the visit to Switzerland was unknown till the autumn of the ensuing year. The Government, however, knew more than enough to show them the problem with which they were confronted, and they were utterly at a loss how to deal with it. They had an army of informers, whose universal stipulation was that their names should be concealed, and that they should not be called on to give open evidence. One of these especially, whose name is still a mystery, was in the closest confidence of the Belfast leaders. He had been among the most enthusiastic of the original members of Tone's society, but he had fallen into debt to others of the confederates and had been expelled. In revenge he sold himself to the Government, satisfied his creditors with money which he received from Pelham, and was at once taken back into confidence.<sup>1</sup> Among others he became an intimate associate of William Orr, a Belfast tradesman, afterwards executed for treason, who at this time was a member of the Head Northern Committee. Orr told him that everything was ready. Dublin, Cork, and Limerick were waiting only for orders to rise; and when the word was given the movement was to be universal and simultaneous. They had 200,000 men

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<sup>1</sup> 'Strange infatuation!' he wrote to his employer; 'when I would have laid down my life to have saved theirs they treated me with insolence and contempt. Now they hail me as their friend. The money wrought miracles in my favour.'—'— to Pelham, 1796.' S.P.O. MSS.

already officered in regiments, they had pikes and muskets for 150,000, and more were on the way. The militia were almost to a man United Irishmen; and in fact, according to Orr, they would have risen in the preceding autumn but for some differences among themselves.

For himself, the informer thought that nothing would be attempted till the arrival of the French. The Belfast men, Neilson, Orr, the two Simms, the party who had taken the oath with Wolfe Tone on Cave Hill, he described 'as wealthy, wily, avaricious, tenacious of their property, distrustful of one another, and if afraid of nothing else, *desperately afraid of the Orangemen, who were five times stronger than people in general believed.*' They had authentic news that Hoche might be expected in the fall of the year, and then undoubtedly an effort would be made. If Hoche came, they were confident that Ireland would be a republic before Christmas. The instant that the signal was given the Orange party were to be assassinated; and the hope and belief of the Central Committee was that nothing could save the Government but treachery among themselves, or twenty or thirty thousand Scotch, English, or German soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The informer, in his letter to Pelham, mentioned a curious story. 'To show you,' he says, 'that they tell me their secrets, here is the account told me of the death of Mr. McMurdoch, of Lurgan. Don't name it. If it get out, they will know whence it came, and my life will be the certain forfeit. McMurdoch was an Orangeman. On July 12 he and others were parading the street, and he quarrelled with a soldier of the 26th Militia. They fought. McMurdoch had the best

‘It is my fixed opinion,’ said the informer, summing up his general conclusion, ‘that unless Govern-<sup>1796</sup>ment disarms the militia or lands a large army of foreigners, the Royal authority will be overthrown. Were the militia done away with and the Orange party embodied, they, with their friends, might avert the blow. As it is now, the Government would be as safe with a republican army of Frenchmen in the island as they are with the militia. I asked Simms what they would do for specie when they had made their revolution. ‘Send to the Jew brokers in Spain,’ said he, ‘and mortgage the estates of the aristocrats, whose property would devolve to those from whom it was wrested.’ Be assured that what I have told you is true. The original agitators have been kept concealed even from the knowledge of the common people. The medium of dissemination has been the priests, and they have concealed from their congregations, on whom they have so effectively wrought, the names of those who have set them on, merely saying that there were men of influence, fortune, and power ready to come forward. The motive of the original agitators—and I mean by them the members of the Catholic Committee that sat in Dublin and many of the Convention that were not on the Committee—was to carry the Catholic Bill

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of the battle. The soldier shouted for help. McMurdoch, seeing some people coming, fled. Delaney, another soldier, came up, and, seeing his comrade down, whispered a word, changed coats, pursued McMurdoch, murdered him, and escaped on the trial from a confusion in the evidence.’



through Parliament by the influence of terrorism. I do not believe that they intended what was certainly an object of the Defenders—plunder and massacre—yet I am well convinced that at this day, in consequence of the rejection of the Bill, there are many who would risk the consequence of an invasion; and to a man their grand object is separation from Great Britain. On this there is no difference of sentiment.’<sup>1</sup>

That this and similar information which came in to them from a hundred quarters contained the exact truth the Irish Council were painfully aware. They were in the extraordinary position of an executive administration in possession of the inmost secrets of an intended and already organised insurrection. They had the names in their hands of most, if not all, of the leaders. They had evidence which, if they could have produced it, would have enabled them at once, and almost without effort, to have trampled out the danger; yet they could not publish what they knew, and appeal for permission to suspend the Constitution, for the Whigs in England would have clamoured that they were seeking excuses for introducing arbitrary power. Every witness that they possessed would have forsworn himself if dragged forward into a court, and thus they were condemned to sit still, as if enchanted, to watch the approach of a convulsion which, had they been free to act, they

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Secret information enclosed by Lord Camden to the Duke of Portland, August 6, 1796.’

could have checked with the touch of a finger; and to bear the reproach in later times of having wickedly encouraged the rebellion, that they might ask afterwards for a renewal of the lease of tyranny.

To Lord Camden the prospect became daily more gloomy. A tree of liberty was planted in Antrim; passengers on the road were made to stop and touch their hats to it, and shout for France and freedom. The militia camp at Limerick 'was so infected with disloyalty' that General Dalrymple recommended the dispersion of the division stationed there. A soldier suspected of giving information to his officers was murdered. A sergeant of a Fencible regiment was shot at and mortally wounded for the same reason. Lord Carhampton had secreted two informers in his own park at Luttrell's Town. It did not save them. They were tracked out and assassinated. So profound and so well founded was the distrust of the militia that the country gentlemen applied for permission to raise companies of Yeomanry out of persons on whom they knew that they could depend. It was the Volunteer movement once more, but entered on by men who were now 'clothed and in their right minds.' The Government was unwilling. Lord Camden shivered at the thought that 'he would be charged with arming Protestants against Papists.' But 'in a moment of danger there was no remedy.'<sup>1</sup> Permission was given. Loyal Protestant Ireland drew

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, August 24, 28; September 3 Portland to Camden, August 29.' S.P.O.

its breath at last, and flew to arms in town and country.

The Orangemen, disowned in their special corporate existence, entered by hundreds into the Ulster regiments. The Corporation of Dublin raised four regiments of infantry and four troops of horse. The Dublin Bar raised a corps. Lord Ormond brought into the field two troops of light cavalry at his own expense.<sup>1</sup> The national press screamed its loudest. Keogh and his friends applied for leave to raise Catholic corps beside the Protestant. Pelham congratulated them on their anxiety to defend their country, and told them that 'their services would be most welcome if they pleased to enter the regiments of their Protestant fellow-subjects; the Crown knew no differences of religion.' The Catholics turned sulkily off. The movement went forward then most earnestly. In a few weeks 30,000 men were enrolled, and with the help of the Government stores most of them were armed. The militia were no longer masters of the situation; and with renewed confidence at the spirit which had shown itself Camden ventured a blow at the insurgent leaders. Napper Tandy, scenting danger, had fled, but Keogh was arrested in Dublin; and on the same day Downshire and Castlereagh swooped down on Belfast with a regiment of dependable troops, seized Neilson, Orr, Russell, the two Simms, and five other gentlemen, and brought

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, September.' S.P.O.

them as prisoners to the Castle. Struck thus on the brain at a critical moment, and alarmed by the rapidly forming Yeomanry, the rebel organisation was embarrassed by its own completeness, and <sup>1796</sup> for many months—months, it will be seen, in which Ireland's fortunes were hanging in the balance—they were unable to rally from a blow which had robbed them of their leaders. The Viceroy called Parliament together to legalise the Yeomanry and to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act.

The autumn session was made as brief as possible, for the country gentlemen were needed at their homes. But though brief, it was stormy. The Opposition, who had counted on the agitation to terrify the Government into conceding the Catholic claims, were furious at the success of measures which threatened the reassertion of Protestant ascendancy. They professed to abhor rebellion: but that the country should be kept upon the brink of it was vital to their hopes; and they played within the limits of the Constitution upon Irish passion with as much zeal as the Belfast Committee.<sup>1</sup>

An amendment to the Address was moved again by Grattan, who inveighed, as in the spring, on the impunity of the Orange outrages. He insisted that

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Opposition are endeavouring to inflame the minds of the people; and as the channel of the House of Commons is the most legal, so it is the most dangerous mode of infusing that poison.'—  
'Camden to Portland, October 13.'

England should capitulate, as he called it, replace Fitzwilliam, and restore peace by abolishing distinctions of religion. To every one who desired that Ireland should remain connected with Great Britain it was by this time certain that distinctions of religion could not be abolished there so long as a separate Parliament sat in Dublin. To propose the admission of the Catholics under a menace of invasion and insurrection was to presume on the presence in the House of a degree of folly and cowardice which even Grattan could not believe to exist there. His aim was not to convince the House, but to inflame the people out of doors. Pelham told him calmly that his speech might have come more fitly from a member of the French Convention, and that the exclusion of the Catholics from Parliament was necessary for the maintenance of the empire.

‘Will the Catholics,’ shrieked Grattan in reply, ‘will the Irishmen suffer a stranger to tell us on what proud terms the English Government will consent to rule in Ireland?—to dictate the incapacity of the nation as the term of their dominion, and the base condition of our connection and allegiance?’

To this question, in a house of a hundred and sixty-one members, a hundred and forty-nine were found to answer Yes, for twelve only followed Grattan to a division.

Undaunted by his friend’s defeat, George Ponsonby opposed the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. ‘The Irish Ministers,’ he said, ‘were men of vindictive

spirit, and he would not sacrifice the liberty of the subject to the lovers of vengeance.'

The times were too serious for folly. Ponsoby was defeated more heavily than Grattan, <sup>1796</sup> by a hundred and thirty-seven to seven.

But the object was the publication of the speeches in the Dublin journals. Again Grattan brought up Emancipation, and let loose upon it the torrent of his eloquence. His motion was that the admission of the Catholics to Parliament was consistent with the security of the empire; his argument, the so-called Liberal assertion that the demands of the majority of a nation ought to be and must be conceded.

'It has come to this,' said Mervyn Archdall; 'in 1793 the Catholics were to be eternally grateful for admission to the franchise; they say now, Admit us to Parliament, and we will not thank you; refuse, and we will rebel.'

'Mr. Grattan tells us,' said Dr. Duigenan, 'that if his motion is not complied with, three million Catholics will rise in rebellion and join the Gallic murderers in an invasion. The agitators in Dublin are to a man republicans and democrats. The enemy which we have to confront is hatred to England and to the principles of the Revolution of 1688. Mr. Grattan speaks of the people of Ireland as if there were none but Catholics. Are we nothing, then! we Protestants? I said that the admission of the Catholics to Parliament had been the cause of all the trouble in Ireland from the time of Elizabeth to the

Revolution, and I was called a prejudiced fool. Then were Burghley, Walsingham, Hampden, Russell, Somers, Hardwicke, all prejudiced fools, for the reason which influenced them in England exists at this moment in Ireland in all its force.'

Grattan was of course defeated almost by as large a majority as before. Even among those who agreed with him in principle the sense was that his motion was ill-timed. 'The effect of the debates,' wrote Camden, 'was that the question had lost its weight. The few supporters felt the subject languid. The Government was on stronger ground than before. The small minority was to the full as advantageous as unanimity.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, October 18, 1796.' S.P.O.

## SECTION IV.

ALTHOUGH the Government had collected sufficient courage to allow the Protestants to arm, they were still nervously anxious to avoid appearing to distrust the Catholics. Whatever their inward thought, they chose to appear to believe that the conspiracy was unconnected with religion, and that the agitation, although the Catholics had been tempted to join in it, was essentially revolutionary. Keogh was the only prominent Catholic who had been arrested. The gentlemen taken at Belfast were Jacobins or atheists. Lord Camden's amiable hope was that he might still detach the great body of the people, or if not the people, the militia and the soldiers of the line, from their dangerous leaders, and he tried to re-establish 'private communications with the principal Catholic clergy and laity.' There was, in fact, but one condition under which the Catholic clergy and laity would ever really be useful to a British Government. As soon as they had been made thoroughly to understand that they were subjects of the British Crown, that England was strong enough to compel them to remain in their allegiance, and that she would exert that strength to the very utmost if they chose to play with rebellion, then there would be no longer reason to distrust them. No sincere Irish Catholic could ever, as Lord Clare said, be voluntarily



loyal to a Protestant sovereign; but he would understand the duty of submission, and the duty of enforcing submission upon his countrymen, when he was made to see without disguise or circumlocution the nature of the alternative. Neither Pitt nor Camden could recognise so unpalatable a truth. The educated Catholic clergy came about them, soft and smooth-spoken, deprecating distrust, deploring the prejudices on both sides which embittered every question, and made a mutual understanding so difficult. An experience too uniform had shown that at critical moments these gentlemen had never practically succeeded in controlling the violence of their people; it was uncertain whether they had tried to control it. Yet the Government still listened to them, and still clung to the belief that they might be persuaded into lending genuine assistance in re-establishing order.

Lord Camden was looking earnestly among the Catholic priests for some one to assist him. He believed that he had found the person that he wanted in a certain Dr. Hussey, the friend and correspondent of Burke, and titular Bishop of Waterford. Dr. Hussey, in the eyes of Liberal politicians, was the model Catholic of his time—an enlightened ecclesiastic, who rose superior to the bigotry of his creed, and combined the spirit of genuine Christianity with the cultivated intelligence of a man of the world. Hussey had been for some time in communication with the Cabinet on the condition of the Irish militia. He had affected to deplore the spread of disaffection in

the ranks. He was in England during the autumn session, impressing upon Portland and Pitt his conviction that if the Catholic clergy were trusted they could restore a better spirit among them. He had offered his own services. So great, indeed, was his zeal and his anxiety, that he sued for and obtained some commission from the Pope in connection with the Catholic soldiers; and in a conversation with Portland he intimated that his influence would be more beneficial if it could be combined with a recognition from the British Government, and 'a commission as Chaplain-General.'<sup>1</sup> Portland inquired what his Papal commission consisted in. Dr. Hussey said it was a power to confer on the Catholic chaplains of the Irish regiments the faculties necessary for their functions; and on this understanding Portland gave him his commission from the Crown. Thus armed, the ingenious gentleman passed over to Ireland. He announced that the Pope had appointed him 'Vicar Apostolic over all the Catholic military in Ireland.'<sup>2</sup> His English commission saved him from risk of interference from the Castle, and suggested the impres-

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<sup>1</sup> 'The anxiety he expressed to obtain the appointment of Chaplain-General was stated by him to arise out of the necessity or advantage of his being placed in such a position by the Government as would qualify him to dispense or distribute the powers he had received from Rome to those for whom they were destined; meaning, as I

understood, the chaplains. Had I the least suspicion that he would have made an improper use of these powers he never would have been entrusted with either.'—'Portland to Pelham, November 1, 1796.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Pelham to the Duke of Portland, October 26.' S.P.O.

sion which the revolutionary party especially desired to create, in order to weaken the Executive Government, that England was on the Catholic side, and disapproved of the coercive policy. His first official act was to throw a stigma on the Castle authorities, and create a grievance which had no existence. He pretended to have discovered<sup>1</sup> that the Catholic soldiers in the militia were taken to Protestant churches, and were forbidden to attend services of their own. Had Dr. Hussey really desired to quiet the mutinous spirit which he came over, as he said, to combat, he would have remembered, even if the charge had been true, that in Spain, or in the Papal dominions, a soldier who had refused to accompany his regiment to mass under plea of being a Protestant, would have been instantly shot for mutiny; and he would have remonstrated quietly and privately with the Viceroy or the Commander-in-Chief. But the supreme object of Irish incendiaries, from highest to lowest, was at that moment to create disaffection in the army, and hatred against the Irish Administration. This enlightened and virtuous prelate, representing himself as speaking with the combined authority of the Pope and the English Cabinet, first invented an untrue charge, and then by letter instructed a priest in the camp outside Dublin 'to warn the artillerymen against the sin of attending

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<sup>1</sup> 'On inquiry it proved to be | —'Pelham to Portland, October  
false. He was totally mistaken.' | 26.' S.P.O.

the Protestant service, and directing them to resist by force.'<sup>1</sup> 'He then,' Pelham informed Portland, 'wrote a long exhortation to the Catholic soldiers in Ireland generally;<sup>2</sup> it is the most inflammatory and dangerous production that bigotry could suggest; he addresses the soldiers in a character which he says your Grace obtained for him from the Pope; he says he received his authority from the Pope, and that the Duke of Portland applied for it.'

Finally, in his character of peace-maker, Dr. Hussey published a pastoral to the clergy of his diocese, bidding them refuse the sacraments to parents who allowed their children to attend the Charter Schools; re-asserting that Catholic soldiers had been forced to attend Protestant places of worship, and bidding the priest instruct them that under such circumstances they were bound to disobey their officers.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Camden had brought into Ireland, as he supposed, a serpent of healing. Dr. Hussey had proved a reptile of a more common type, and had turned on him and stung him. Under any circumstances the eve of a rebellion was not the moment to invite soldiers to mutiny. His official recognition by the Cabinet was an additional obligation to forbearance. With ingenious wickedness Dr. Hussey took advantage

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<sup>1</sup> Pelham's secretary saw this letter I have in my possession — letter.

'Pelham to Portland, October 26.'

<sup>2</sup> 'As it was certainly written with ability, his vanity got the better of his prudence, and that

<sup>3</sup> 'Pastoral Letter by R.R. Dr. Hussey.'—*Plowden*, vol. iv. Appendix, 109.

of the opportunity which the Government had allowed him to aggravate to the very utmost the danger which he had undertaken to counteract, and exhibited in a remarkable instance the value of the support which the English Cabinet was so eager to conciliate.

In the Yeomanry, the Castle possessed a force unassailable by the arts of priests. Coarser methods were therefore adopted to embarrass and weaken it. Countrymen who dared to enlist received warnings to withdraw, and, refusing to obey, were assassinated. On the 1st of November the Government arsenal at Belfast was broken into and plundered. Informers stated that an organised system of murder was set on foot to terrify the Protestant clergy and magistrates into inactivity;<sup>1</sup> and whatever may have been their defects when contending in the open field, Irish conspirators have always been signally successful with the midnight pike and pistol. The state of Ulster became so alarming, owing to the compelled inaction of the Orangemen, that Carhampton went to Antrim, in November, to apply the methods which had been successful in Connaught.<sup>2</sup> But the Cabinet were nervous; Portland expressed a hope that he would restore order without being driven to acts of severity.<sup>3</sup> Lord Camden said that the Cabinet's wishes, coupled with their

<sup>1</sup> 'The principle of the United Irishmen is to *cure*, by which is meant to assassinate all persons and magistrates who actively oppose them.'—'Information forwarded by Lord Camden to the Duke of

Portland, November 13.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Camden to Portland, November 1.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Portland to Camden, November 5.'

remarks on the Insurrection Act, made him most unwilling to resort to its powers; but how without severity he was to deal with murders, threats of murder, plundering and sacking houses, waylaying and wounding soldiers, he was for his part at a loss to comprehend.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of cruisers and coastguard officers, muskets and powder continued to pour in. In December 1796 an American brig was seized on the coast of Antrim with 20,000 stand of guns on board, and a train of artillery. In significant defiance the confederate peasants assembled in thousands to dig the potatoes and cut and carry the corn of the arrested leaders, and gave their field-work the ostentatious appearance of military display.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, November 14.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Hill describes one of these singular scenes, in a letter to Secretary Cooke. Having notice of an intended assembly for potato-digging, he took sixty soldiers with him and repaired to the spot, with the Sheriff and Lord Henry Murray.

'About eleven,' he writes, 'we saw an immense crowd coming along the hills, from the mountains which separate the Maghera side from the Newtown side of the county of Derry. About a thousand came to the river which was between us. Five hundred forded it immediately; and as they came directly up to us, we imagined it might turn out a troublesome affair to them. We left the military at

a distance, rode up, and ordered them not to proceed. The Sheriff read the proclamation. I spoke to them. They remonstrated with all imaginable cunning professions of peace and humility. Would we impede them in the charitable work of digging a forlorn woman's potatoes, whose husband was in gaol? If we persisted to order it they would disperse; at the same time begged to be informed if they were at liberty to dig their own potatoes on their respective farms? I answered, and they dispersed. We withdrew a quarter of a mile with the soldiers. Then they galloped up again, their numbers being by this time trebled. We brought up the soldiers a second time, and gave them ten minutes to disperse, which they did. There was no shouting,

Throughout the island, or the greater part of the island, the people were ready with arms concealed to rise and fall into the ranks assigned to them under local leaders already chosen. Happily for the peace of Ireland, they had been deprived at that particular moment of the central authority on which they relied, by the arrest of those on whom devolved the duty of giving the signal when the French invaders were to be looked for.

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<p>no imprecations, no seditious language, uttered by any of them. About half had spades. What alarmed me most was to observe the calmness observed by people assembled in such multitudes, and yet acting with one system, evidently under the control of invisible guidance, no leader or heads</p>	<p>appearing. Every man held his spade like a musket, and seemed, notwithstanding the humble cant, to show you, by the manner he balanced it, and his erect gait, that he could manage the other as well.' 'Sir G. Hill to Mr. Cooke, November 14.' S.P.O.</p>
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## SECTION V.

THE story returns to Wolfe Tone, who was left embarking at Belfast for America, after devoting himself anew to the cause of his country at MacArt's fort. His companions on that remarkable occasion were now at Dublin, in Newgate. He himself, after a successful voyage across the Atlantic, arrived with his family at Philadelphia at the end of the summer of 1795. Here he found his friends Rowan and Napper Tandy. Here, too, he made acquaintance with M. Adet, the Minister of the French Republic; and whether it was from the aspect of a new country, the advice of Rowan, who had forsworn Irish politics, or the coolness of Adet, when he communicated to him his hopes and purposes, certain it was that Tone began to think that life might have better objects than lighting revolutions, and was making up his mind to a quiet residence in America. He bought a farm at Princeton, in New Jersey, where he settled his wife and children. He was accustoming his hand to axe and plough, and was sinking into useful industry, when he was roused by letters from Keogh and Neilson, which told him how fast Ireland was ripening, and pressed him to lose not a moment in bringing France to their help. Tone's nature was easily set on fire. The Simms sent him money. Taking his letters to Adet, and receiving in return introductions in cipher to M. de la Croix, the



Minister for Foreign Affairs at Paris, he once more committed himself to the ocean, sailed for Havre, and landed there on the 2nd of February, 1796. Thence, in high spirits, lively, and jaunty as ever, he proceeded to Paris.

Of all the United Irishmen, of all Irish rebels of whom the history of that country retains a record Wolfe Tone is the least offensive. He tells no lies about himself. He never deals in inflated sentiment, unless when he confesses to have been drunk, or when drawing a programme for his society, at which he was laughing in his sleeve. He hated England because he considered that England had slighted him; but he never conceals that he would have accepted gladly the most common-place employment if Pitt would have condescended to bestow it upon him. His frankness disarms indignation, for he paints himself as he really was, light, rollicking, ignorant, unread in everything except in Shakespeare, with a talent for ornamental writing, which he valued at no more than its worth, hating humbug and pretence, and plunging along the career of revolution with a careless impetuosity, more as if he was riding with the Kilkenny foxhounds than concerned in any serious purpose.

On the 12th of February he was in Paris, the paradise of republican imagination. Fresh from the costliness of Philadelphia, he finds himself in luxury which cost him next to nothing. He breakfasts and dines in the *Maison Egalité*, claret and Burgundy flowing like water; the enjoyments once the privilege

of the few, now, under the blessed auspices of the Revolution, being within the reach of the humblest. He saunters in the Champs Elysées, and his eyes glisten in sympathy with the laughing crowds. At the theatre the band plays the 'Marseillaise.' The entire audience is on its feet to join in the Litany of Freedom. At the words 'Aux armes, citoyens!' the National Guards deploy upon the stage. The spectacle transforms itself into a superb revolutionary pageant; every heart beats, and every youth pants for an opportunity of pouring out his life-blood for his country. No wonder that Tone, to whom France had for five years been a land of promise, was delighted with what he saw, and none the less when the papers began to fill with accounts of the doings in Italy of the young Napoleon. Who could say but Napoleon might be liberator of Ireland, or if not Napoleon, then Hoche, the hero of Quiberon? He waited on De la Croix, and presented Adet's letter. The Foreign Minister was civil. The Directory had long known that Ireland was England's vulnerable side. Their difficulty had been to understand so singular a people, who in faith were ardent Catholics, yet in politics were said to be eager for insurrection. Tone was ready with abundant explanation. None could speak with more authority than he. He could say with truth that he had been agent of the Catholic Committee, that he was the founder of the United Irishmen, and was in the confidence of the chiefs of the Defenders. With less truth, but not without

foundation, he assured the Directory that the whole of Ireland was ripe for revolt, except the lords and gentlemen and clergy of the Established Church. Nor was Ireland all; for more than half the seamen in the British fleet were Irish; half the British army were Irish—the Yeomanry not being yet enrolled. England, he could say correctly, had but a handful of troops in the island on which she could rely, for the militia was heart and soul with the nation; and on the first sight of the green flag every Irish soldier and sailor in the service would turn upon his officers.

The Directory, when so flattering a report was brought to them, inquired naturally why, if this was the true account of the situation, Ireland was doing nothing for herself? The brighter the colouring of Tone's picture, the more inexplicable the apathy.

The true answer would have been, not that Tone had given an inaccurate account of the disposition of his countrymen, but that while no people talked more passionately of their nationality, no people also had so few of the virtues on which national life depends. The Irish had no coherence, no fortitude, no power of self-sacrifice. The patriotism of which they boasted was from the lips outwards. Even Tone himself would at that moment have become a faithful subject of King George if Pitt had offered him a writership in India.

To the French Government he could but insist that the fact was as he described it. If France would send help, the Irish would rise effectually. If left to them-

selves, their local and partial insurrections would be easily and savagely repressed. The chain would only be drawn tighter, and the common enemy <sup>1796</sup> of Ireland and France would be stronger than ever.

De la Croix inquired if it would not be sufficient to supply arms? Tone said it would not. Would two thousand men be sufficient? Tone told him he might as well send twenty. Two thousand men would be overwhelmed before the people could join them, and there would be a second Quiberon. This, too, seemed strange, if the twenty thousand militia were prepared to mutiny. The negotiation hung fire. It had been conducted so far through subordinates. Tone consulted Monroe, the American Minister. Monroe advised him to go straight to head-quarters, and demand an audience with Carnot. He tells the story of the interview with characteristic *naïveté*.

‘Feb. 24, 1796. — To the Luxembourg. I am a pretty fellow to go to the Directoire Exécutif! In a fright — conning speeches in execrable French all the way. What shall I say to Carnot? Whatsoever the Lord putteth in my mouth that surely shall I utter. Pluck up my spirits. Mount the stairs like a lion. Request to see Carnot. Clerk stares, but sends me up. Admitted. Carnot in white satin with crimson robe. In horrid French I said I was an Irishman, secretary and agent to three million Catholics in that country, representative also of nine hundred thousand Dissenters of that kingdom, all eager to throw off the yoke of England. He doubted

my numbers. I re-asserted them. The population of Ireland was near about four millions and a half. Of these three million nine hundred thousand were for France and against England. He asked what we wanted. An armed force, I answered, as a *point d'appui* to begin with, with arms and a little money. He put many questions which showed he had been thinking the subject over. I am to see him again. Perhaps my abhorrence and detestation of the name of England makes me too sanguine. What will Fitzgibbon say now? He used to call me a viper in the bosom of Ireland. He lies. I am a better Irishman than he and his whole gang of rascals. I am as vain as the Devil. Allons, Enfants de la patrie.'<sup>1</sup>

M. de la Croix now sent for Tone again. The British navy, he said, was France's difficulty. But for the British navy sixty thousand men could be landed in Kent, march on London, and settle England and Ireland together. Could not the Irish seamen, if they were as numerous as Tone said, bring about a mutiny?

There was much to be done in that way, as was found two years later at Portsmouth and at the Nore, but Tone did not respond. He did not like circuitous methods. Let Home Rule be first established in Dublin, and every Irishman in the British empire would then have a centre of allegiance. He was

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Wolfe Tone*, by himself. February 1796. First interview with Carnot. Abridged.

impatient to be on the way. Moments were precious. In a few weeks the Channel fleet would be at sea. He heard that military camps were forming in Ireland. A German contingent might be sent. <sup>1796</sup> The British army might be reinforced. A thousand things might happen if France was long in making up its mind. He consoled himself by his old methods.

‘I finish my choice bottle of Burgundy every day. Too much. I resolve every morning to drink but half, and every day break my resolution. I wish I had P. P. here,<sup>1</sup> and then perhaps I should live more soberly. Oh, Lord! Soberly! Yes, we should be a sober pair of patriots. It is squire’s custom every afternoon as soon as he is drunk. Huzza! I hope to see a battle yet before I die. The French have an abominable custom of adulterating their Burgundy with water.’

By and by Carnot bade him draw up some plan, that he might judge of it. He offered two. The first, which he thought certain to succeed, would be to land twenty thousand men close to Dublin. The capital must fall, and the Catholic Committee and the United Irish leaders would be on the spot to form a new Government. If twenty thousand men could not be spared, five thousand might be thrown on shore somewhere near Belfast. They could seize the line of the Few mountains, and the country would have time to organise before they could be dislodged.

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<sup>1</sup> His friend Russell.

Carnot, with all Europe on his hands, had no leisure for details. He turned Tone over to General Clarke, an Irishman of the 'Old Brigade.' Clarke, who was a gentleman, and had inherited old-fashioned traditions, had no objection to an orderly conquest, but doubted the propriety of letting loose the ferocious Irish Catholic peasantry. Infinite horrors he thought would follow unless the mob could be held in order.

Tone admitted that many shocking things were likely and even certain to happen, but a massacre on the most extensive scale would be no more than retributive justice. No men on earth had been more oppressive and tyrannical than the gentry of Ireland, and they and their families would be the principal sufferers.

Wretched gentry of Ireland! It was for this, then, that they had armed the Volunteers of '82, and demanded a Constitution at the bayonet's point, with Grattan at their head. Like the companions of Ulysses they had let loose the winds with their own foolish hands, and were now likely to perish in the tempest.

To the apostle of the new creed General Clarke appeared 'thirty years behind his age;' unequal altogether to the era of the Guillotine and the Rights of Man.

Amidst these discussions the project of invasion was mistily taking shape. Bonaparte's campaign in Italy made the Directory sanguine. In April they began to contemplate seriously sending a fleet to the

Irish coast, and landing arms and cannon. But while the grass grew the steed was starving. News came of Gunpowder Acts and Insurrection Acts, <sup>1796</sup> and sharp measures in Connaught, and then of the arrest of Keogh,<sup>1</sup> the penitent Gog, just when he had abjured his errors and was on the right track.

‘That infernal Government of Ireland!’ was Tone’s comment; ‘if I cannot prevent his fall, I will revenge it. The Irish aristocracy shall take the consequences. They show no mercy, and they deserve none. If ever I have the power I will most heartily concur in making them a dreadful example. Oh, France! France! what do you not deserve if you suffer this crisis to escape you?’

There was no lack of will in France; but the ‘Organiser of victory’ had not conquered Holland and Italy, and driven the Germans over the Rhine, by blindly rushing on in the dark. Ireland, with its priests and its patriots, its blazing promises and ineffectual performances, was a problem, to be well scanned before it was meddled with. Again Tone sought Carnot. Carnot told him that they wanted more information.

Three more entries in the journal record his dreams and his impatience.

‘May 2.—The Luxembourg. They will send a trusted agent to Ireland, and will be guided by his report. Nothing definite. I begin to fear it

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<sup>1</sup> Keogh was arrested in the spring of 1796.



will be the backwoods of America again. Delay! delay!

'June 20.—My birthday. Thirty-three years old. At that age Alexander had conquered the world, and Wolfe had expired in the arms of victory. The British fleet is in the Channel, so nothing will be done before the winter.

'June 28.—Oh, if the British were once chased from Ireland, as the Austrians from Milan! Who knows? But this fleet torments me. Damn them! Sink them! with God knows how many admirals!'

No foreign power had ever meddled with Ireland without repenting it. Twice the Popes had sent help to their afflicted children. Gregory the Thirteenth had sent a legate and a few hundred Italians. The legate perished in a bog; the bodies of the Italians were buried in the sands at Smerwick. When the massacre of 1641 restored Ireland for a brief interval to the native race, Innocent the Tenth despatched the Cardinal Rinuccini to restore and reinvigorate the Church. The Irish themselves made the country intolerable to him. He struggled in vain to coerce them with spiritual thunder, and abandoned his task as impossible. Philip the Second sent an army to assist in the destruction of the British power there, which was described to him as all but annihilated. The British power proved strong enough to defeat the Irish, to take the Spaniards prisoners, and send them home wiser than they had come. Louis the Fourteenth had taken up the cause with the fairest

prospects of all, yet Louis had prospered no better, and had wearied of his allies after a brief taste of their quality. The Directory, it is likely, after carefully considering matters, would have decided unfavourably but for the unexpected support which the cause suddenly received in communications from Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor. General Hoche, who had been already consulted on Tone's schemes, was deputed to meet them, and substantially, as far as concerned the prospects of an Irish rising, they confirmed what Tone had said. Here was something substantial. The brother of the Duke of Leinster, and the heir of an Irish peerage, carried an authority even among republicans which could not be allowed to an adventurer like Tone. Their adherence, at any rate, seemed a security that the intended rebellion would not be a mere rising of a savage peasantry against the wealthy and the educated, but a respectable revolt against a foreign oppressor.

The interview was a secret, but Hoche returned from it with his mind made up. One day in the middle of July, when Tone was sitting despondent in his room, he was summoned to the Luxembourg. He found himself in the presence of a distinguished-looking officer, who told him that he was General Hoche, and proceeded to question him on a number of points—how an army could be fed in Ireland, what was the disposition of the priests, the humour of the militia, the condition and numbers of the British force. He then alluded as if accidentally to Arthur O'Connor, and

asked if he was not in Parliament. 'There is a lord too in your country who is a patriot, the son of a duke, is there not?' he added. Tone spoke applaudingly of both Lord Edward and his friend, without guessing the motive of the question. He praised the Duke of Leinster, who, he said, would be neutral if not favourable. The rest of the aristocracy he apprehended would be massacred through the just indignation of the people, whom they had so cruelly oppressed.

The reply to this was a sharp and unexpected expression of disgust. Hoche, however, said little, and the ambitious genius of the Young Irishman was somewhat overawed. 'Hoche,' writes Tone, with creditable candour, 'told Clarke he had got me by heart. Was that a compliment? I fear he does spy into the bottom of this Justice Shallow. Never mind. If the business is done, it matters little whether I have any talents or not.' Hoche, indeed, saw through Tone, but still on the whole liked him. He determined to take him with him, as likely to be useful in landing; and, that he might have a chance, if taken, of escaping the gallows, he gave him a commission in the French army.

All was now running smoothly. The expedition was to sail, and sail as soon as transports could be got ready. Tone mentioned the English fleet. Hoche laid his hand on his arm.

'Ne craignez rien,' he said; 'nous irons, vous pouvez y compter,' but again intimated, like De la Croix, that a mutiny of the Irish seamen would be highly convenient. He was equally positive as to the point on which the

invasion was to be directed, and he would have acted more wisely if he had listened to Tone's opinion. The most dangerous and the best organised of the United Irishmen were the Ulster Republicans. 1796

Tone advised that the expedition should sail from some port in Holland, and be directed upon the North of Ireland or on Dublin. Hoche decided to sail from Brest, and to land in Munster. The essential thing, however, was to land somewhere, and about this no question was longer entertained. The plans were arranged. Hoche was to take with him 'the very *élite* of the Army of the Ocean,' and as large a number as Tone himself had asked for. They went together to Brest in October to hurry the preparations. At Brest they heard that the Irish Government had taken the alarm, and had arrested the members of the Belfast Committee. At the moment Wolfe Tone was unable to realise how serious a blow had been struck. In a society at once secretly and severely organised an injury to the brain is temporary paralysis. He had been kept in ignorance of the accession of Lord Edward and O'Connor to the cause, and outside his own circle there was no one known to him to whom information could be sent of the intended expedition, that the separate lodges might be prepared. To deceive the English, the armament assembling at Brest was represented in the papers as designed against Portugal. The Irish County Committees were at the mercy of rumours. The French were actually coming, and there were no means of letting the Irish insurgents know it, that they might prepare to receive them.

For his reception in Ireland Hoche relied wholly upon Tone. In his own share of the matter he meant, as he said, to leave nothing to chance. An English squadron lay between Brest and Ushant. There would perhaps be a fight, but he intended to be in overwhelming force. An American officer, Colonel Tate, was despatched as a diversion with eleven hundred ruffians of the *Légion Noire* to surprise and burn Bristol.<sup>1</sup> Admiral Joyeuse was busy day and night in harbour and dockyard with the equipment of the fleet. Hoche, to Tone's disgust, amused himself in the interval with a pretty Breton aristocrat, risking a bullet which might ruin all. Tone himself plunged daily up and down on the ramparts, watching the sea and ships, and cursing the lagging hours.

On the 1st of December Joyeuse announced that he was ready, and orders were issued to embark. The expedition was on a scale which, if it reached Ireland, could not fail to effect something considerable. The fleet consisted of seventeen ships of the line and eleven frigates and corvettes. In addition there were fifteen transports, large and small. The army was composed of fifteen thousand of the very best troops which France possessed, with heavy trains of field artillery, and sufficient spare muskets and powder to arm half the peasants in Ireland. The reputation of General

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<sup>1</sup> This party landed at Milford, and were almost immediately taken prisoners.

Hoche was second only to that of Napoleon. The officer next in command was Grouchy. The point of attack was to be either Cork, Waterford, or Limerick, as circumstances might determine. 1796

The weather was unusually fine. The wind had hung in the east throughout November, and remained in the same quarter, blowing straight for the Irish coast, with the water as smooth as at midsummer.

The inveterate negligence which characterised English policy whenever the interests of Ireland were at stake had left Brest for a moment unwatched. The blockading squadron, so inattentive while at its post that a French admiral had passed in without a shot being fired, bringing five large ships to Joyeuse, had drawn off afterwards, leaving the sea entirely open. Independent of the Yeomanry, Lord Camden had not ten thousand men on whom he could rely, and to bring them into the field he must strip of its garrison every town in the country. Could Joyeuse carry his fleet into some safe Irish harbour, and could Hoche throw his army on the shore, nothing short of a miracle could save the English power in Ireland from temporary destruction or the unhappy country from an insurrection which would reproduce on a yet more extended scale the crimes and miseries of 1641.

The troops embarked as they were ordered. Day passed after day and the east wind blew fair; yet still one obstruction after another delayed their departure for a fortnight. On the evening of the 15th of December the signal was made at last to prepare to

weigh. The morning following the entire fleet, forty-three sail in all, cleared out of the harbour and were on the way to the Irish coast. The weather was still so fine that they ventured the passage of the Raz, a narrow sound, peculiarly dangerous from the violence of the tide which sweeps through it. Night came on them before they had reached the open water. The 'Séduisant,' with five hundred men on board, struck on a rock and was lost with all hands. Her misfortune was unknown to her consorts. From bad seamanship, or some other cause, the ships were scattered. When day broke eighteen sail only were visible from the deck of the 'Indomptable,' an 84-gun line-of-battle ship, on board which were Tone and the regiment to which he was attached. The 'Fraternité,' a frigate, which carried Hoche and his staff, was nowhere to be seen. The rendezvous, in the event of separation, was Mizen Head. The orders to each vessel which might have strayed was to cruise off Mizen Head for five days, then to proceed to the mouth of the Shannon and wait there for three days; if by that time the rest of the fleet had not appeared, she was to return to Brest. On the 18th there was a dense fog, which partially lifted towards evening. The same eighteen ships were in sight. The 'Immortalité,' with Grouchy, was made out to be one of them. - At dawn, on the 19th, twelve other vessels were showing, but there were still no signs of the 'Fraternité.' The fog was followed by a dead calm, which continued all day—a sure precursor in those seas at that time of year of a shift of

wind or change of weather. Three more stragglers drifted up in the afternoon. Thirty-three out of the forty-three were now collected. The wind on the 20th chopped round to the westward, bringing mist and haze, but it remained light, and at night there was again a calm. On the 21st Cape Clear was in sight, twelve miles distant. Thirty-five sail were then counted, and only two frigates missing; of the two, however, one was still the 'Fraternité,' with her precious freight. As the wind stood they could then with ease have either made Kinsale, where there were but two English men-of-war to oppose them, or they could have forced their way through the weak defences of Cork Harbour, or have run up to Waterford. Bantry Bay was open before evening. At any time during that day or the next, had Grouchy ventured to act on his own responsibility, he might have chosen his own point of landing, and Cork must have fallen. It had no land defences, and on the side of the sea no batteries which a couple of line-of-battle ships could not have silenced. General Dalrymple, who was in command there, had four thousand men only. Had Grouchy known Dalrymple's weakness, and had he known also that at that moment there were in Cork two years' provision stores for the British navy, valued at nearly two millions, he would probably have risked the displeasure, or have earned the gratitude, of his senior officer by swooping at once on so splendid a prize.

Then, as twenty years later, on another occasion no less



critical, Grouchy was the good genius of the British Empire. He continued to cruise as he was  
1796 directed, standing off and on upon that uncertain coast. On the evening of the 22nd the wind whirled back into the east, and surged down the rifts between the hills with fitful menacing gusts that foretold a storm. Beating in the face of it with extreme difficulty, sixteen of the best sailors, the 'Immortalité' among them, recovered Bantry Bay and made their way into it to Bere Island, where they anchored. The rest were blown to sea, to stay there till the wind should abate.

On the morning of the 23rd it was blowing a gale, and blowing with the peculiar fury to be met with only in long narrow bays enclosed within mountain ranges. Snow was falling fast, hiding the land and hiding the ships from one another. During that day they were unable to communicate. On the 24th there was a lull. A council of war was held in the cabin of the 'Immortalité.' The division in the bay was found to contain between six and seven thousand soldiers, with the largest proportion of the small arms and cannon. Tone advised that they should proceed as they were, and work the ships to the head of the estuary, to the sheltered roadstead behind Whiddy Island. There a landing would be easy, and they could push their way to Cork. The officers were eager and in high spirits. Grouchy agreed, the anchors were lifted, and the fleet began to struggle towards Bantry. Unhappily for them, the wind rose

again and blew dead in their teeth. After eight hours of desperate effort they had not gained a yard. At dark they anchored again at their old places.

Wilder yet broke Christmas Day, the bay brown with dirty foam, the hills deep in snow, <sup>1796</sup> the tempest shrieking over the water. What was to be done? Every moment was precious. Their arrival had been a surprise, but their presence on the coast must have been by this time signalled over the island, and whatever troops the English had must be on the march to the threatened point. Tone had calculated, and perhaps rightly, that could they have landed on the 24th they would have taken Cork without firing a shot. Now, at least, they would have to fight a battle, and visions began to float before him of capture and a possible gallows. He was fertile in expedients. The troops in Limerick would be on the way to Cork. As the wind stood it would be easier to reach the mouth of the Shannon than Bantry. To take Limerick might be even better than to take Cork. But Tone could give no commands, and the 'Immortalité' was anchored on the other side of the bay, and the sea was too wild to allow a boat to live. Another day went by, spent in curses upon weather which refused to mend. At night a frigate swept by the 'Indomptable.' Some one on her deck shouted through the screaming of the storm to cut cable and make for sea. The officers of the 'Indomptable' knew not what the frigate was or who had hailed them. They waited for

day, and day brought a fog so thick that they could not see the length of their own ship.

Six days now in Bantry Bay, the Irish shore almost within speaking distance, the wind fair from England and the English fleet still neglecting to come in search of them. Yet with so choice an opportunity the French were prevented from using it by an accident which might not occur in a bay like Bantry once in a dozen years.

On the 27th the tempest was so furious that they dragged their anchors. One by one they cut their cables and were swept, under bare poles, to sea. By midday eight vessels only remained. But these were the best in the fleet. They had still four thousand men, afraid of nothing, and equal to any work which soldiers could do. The chance of Cork was lost, but they might try some other point on the west coast. They were ashamed to go back, having attempted nothing. The eight ships weighed and sailed, intending to keep together and try a descent on Clare.

But it was the story of the Armada over again, and in the same sea where the mightiest of the Spanish galleons had gone down the revolutionary invaders were encountered by the same enemies. As they ran out clear of the Durseys the hurricane backed towards the west. The sea, which, as long as the wind was off shore, had been moderately smooth, now rose with a fury with which French seamanship could not dare to contend. A huge wave struck the 'Indomptable, stove in the quarter-gallery, and swamped the cabins.

At a signal from the commodore the remnant of the magnificent squadron wore round and retraced its course towards Brest, where, after having met with no human opposition, having never seen <sup>1796</sup> an English flag, and having been baffled only by an extraordinary combination of accidents, all the ships but four eventually reappeared. The 'Séduisant' and one other vessel were lost; two, being crippled by the storm, were picked up by English cruisers. The 'Fraternité,' which had parted from the fleet on the night after they had sailed, had never reached Ireland at all. She had strayed from her course in the fog; and, being afterwards caught in the gale, had crept into Rochelle.

## SECTION VI.

SUCH is the story of the French invasion of Ireland in 1796, so far as it was known to Wolfe Tone on the deck of the 'Indomptable.' The inner or Irish side of it is equally curious and instructive.

On the 23rd of December, Mrs. White, the wife of Mr. White, of Seafield, near Bantry, rushed breathless into Cork barracks to tell General Dalrymple that twenty-five French men-of-war were beating into Bantry Bay. An O'Sullivan from Berehaven came immediately after, saying that he had himself counted eighteen large ships, and that ten more were reported to have been seen in the offing. A third messenger from Dunmanus<sup>1</sup> came with further news that a boat had landed there, the crew of which declared that the whole number of the fleet was thirty-eight, and that on board they had fifty thousand men. It was clear to Dalrymple, at all events, that a large French force of some kind had arrived. An express was sent to Dublin and an express-boat to England. Dalrymple set what force he had in motion without a moment's delay, and pushed forward to Dunmanway, where fresh information was waiting for him. Mr. White himself, knowing the importance of time, was doing his best to obstruct, if he could not prevent, the

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<sup>1</sup> The south-east side of Bantry Bay, opposite Berehaven.

expected landing. The people, having received no orders from the Revolutionary Committee, were falling into their natural places. White reported that all ranks were supporting him, and every hour <sup>1796</sup> was bringing him fresh volunteers. For the moment the weather made landing impossible. Should the storm abate he undertook to do his very best,<sup>1</sup> and he received unexpected and valuable help in a naval officer, Lieutenant Pulling, who came up from Berehaven. Admiral Kingsmill, having heard at Kinsale that a large fleet was on the coast, had despatched his Flag Lieutenant, Mr. Pulling, in a revenue cutter to reconnoitre. Pulling had followed the French fleet into the bay, had slipped in behind Bere Island into Castletown, and, after attempting in vain to examine the ships more closely, had ridden off to Bantry, to Mr. White's house. Had the weather moderated they could have offered but little resistance, but at any rate there was as yet no disposition visible in the peasantry to join the invaders.

Dalrymple's experience was not less favourable. On the road between Cork and Dunmanway he described the people as 'behaving charmingly,'<sup>2</sup> and on the people everything depended. If there was a general rising, troops could not be spared to reinforce him from other parts of the island.

If the same spirit which prevailed in Cork prevailed

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<sup>1</sup> 'Richard White to General Coothe, December 24.' S.P. 2

<sup>2</sup> 'Dalrymple to Pelham, December 24.'

elsewhere, and if he was allowed but a week before Hoche attacked him, he counted that by that time he would have of regular Yeomanry and militia perhaps fourteen thousand men, and with them, though all too few, he hoped to make a stand. He calculated with certainty that before many days the Portsmouth fleet would be in the bay. If due expedition was made, it might come in time to find<sup>1</sup> the French army still on board, and take or destroy them.

He might look long before he would see the Portsmouth fleet. While Dalrymple was straining every nerve at Dunmanway, the Duke of Portland was calmly writing to Lord Camden that there was no harbour in France except Brest where a hostile expedition could be equipped, and Brest had been so closely watched that it was impossible such a force could have come out as the news from Ireland reported.<sup>2</sup> Camden too, when the Cork express reached him, 'confessed himself not to entertain any strong expectation that the fleet would prove to be that of an enemy.'<sup>3</sup> Camden, however, did not rest in his incredulity. Acting as if the worst was true, he sent from Dublin every man

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<sup>1</sup> 'If the wind fly to the west, which it probably will, and if it snows, which we expect, they cannot leave Bantry Bay, and must fall a sacrifice to that which, I suppose, must arrive, unless the probable never happens.'—'Dalrymple to Pelham, December 26. From Dunmanway.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Portland to Camden, December 26.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Camden to Portland, December 24.' S.P.O.

that he had, 'the Yeomanry corps displaying the most splendid spirit,' and taking charge of the city while the garrison was wanted in the field. Limerick and Galway 'vied with each other in demonstrations of loyalty.' From all parts of the southern provinces regiments of the line and of the militia were streaming by forced marches towards Dunmanway. The militia betrayed no signs of backwardness. Snow fell and lay deep. The peasantry 'showed the troops the utmost hospitality.' They lodged them at night in their cabins; they shared their potatoes with them when they rested in the villages at midday. Though sworn probably to a man to join the French when they arrived, they turned out with their spades to clear the snow from the roads for the baggage-waggons.

It was now a question of time. Could reinforcements reach Dalrymple before Hoche could land and destroy him and make himself master of Cork? Most nervously he watched the sky. Another French boat had come on shore. The officer was made prisoner, brought to Dalrymple's head-quarters and questioned. He told the exact truth, and the truth was not reassuring.

'Unless our fleet arrives,' he wrote again on the 26th, 'the first fair day the French will assemble in the bay and the troops land. They will find difficulties; but composed as they are of the chosen part of the army, I am inclined to think they will find the way. I cannot say what we shall do. The troops suffer



extremely from the inclemency of the weather.<sup>1</sup> The greatest alertness appears in the Yeomanry and the people in the towns. I would fain hope the attachment will not change in case of misfortune. Time will prove.'

The next morning Dalrymple was at Bantry, breathing somewhat more freely.

'December 27.—The tempest continues. No debarkation has been effected, and we have had more time to prepare than we expected. The arrival of the troops from Limerick will enable us to cover Cork. The French fleet must soon go to sea, but they will probably land the soldiers, and not unlikely occupy Bere Island, which may easily be defended. The season has been uncommonly severe. The troops were little prepared for war, and have suffered.

'December 28.—Blew a hurricane last night. Report says they are driven to sea. If forced by superior strength, we mean to fall back towards Cork; at all events, to endeavour to secure Cork, which we shall not abandon unless forced by imperious circumstances.'<sup>2</sup>

A few hours later Mr. White briefly announced—'They are all gone to the devil.' He was premature. After the first detachment had disappeared, stray ships

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<sup>1</sup> It was the usual story. The call for service was sudden, and there were neither tents, blankets, spare cloths, nor any one other

requisite for a winter campaign at hand.

<sup>2</sup> 'Letter from General Dalrymple to Pelham, December, 1796.' S.P.O.

dropped in with the mending of the weather from the rest of the scattered fleet, and the expedition was thought to be returning. On the 31st four line-of-battle ships, a frigate, and two sloops were in the mouth of the bay, and four others were in the offing. On the 3rd of January six large ships were at the Berehaven anchorage, two frigates at Whiddy <sup>1797</sup> Island, and four other frigates in the bay. They formed a part of the fleet which had been in the mouth of the Shannon, and were returning in search of their consorts.<sup>1</sup> But no consorts appeared, and at length they gave up expecting them. On the 7th they were reported to have finally disappeared. The suspense was over, and a danger so great that only when it was over men were able to understand what they had escaped, passed away as suddenly as it had appeared.

Two points, before uncertain, had been established by the attempt—

First, that Ireland could never more rely on the protection of the British fleet. A French expedition had been able to leave Brest, to approach the Irish shore, to lie in and about its bays for a fortnight, and return to France without being met and fought with. Admiral Kingsmill had at Cork and Kinsale the 'Monarch,' an eighty-gun ship; two frigates, the 'Magnanimous' and the 'Diana;' and the guardship. On the first alarm the 'Powerful,' a

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<sup>1</sup> 'Dalrymple to Pelham, January 3, 1797.'

seventy-four, was sent over, and half-a-dozen frigates. Two of the latter came into Cork so shattered by the storm that they were described as wrecks. As soon as Portland could be brought to believe that the expedition was a real fact, Lord Bridport was ordered over from Portsmouth; but instead of hurrying to Bantry, where he might still have been in time to catch the last division which left it, he lingered in the mouth of the Channel, and took at last one ship and one frigate, and that was all.

When the worst was over the Cabinet made light of the peril. Portland affected to regret that the landing had not been attempted, 'so confident was he of the loyalty and bravery of the troops.' As soon as Bridport had sailed he promised Camden 'that he should hear no more of the Armada but its disasters and distresses.' 'The French fleet should be again in Bantry Bay, but brought there as an example of their rashness, and trophies for the loyal and brave people of Ireland to contemplate.'<sup>1</sup> Bombast was a bad substitute for energy. 'The loyal and brave people of Ireland' had received but poor encouragement at a moment when England was needing their services to the full as much as they needed the help of England; and the proved facility by which a French invasion could be accomplished on the largest scale was an obvious temptation to the Irish rebels to expect, and to the French to venture, a second experiment.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Portland to Camden, January 17, 1797.'

'We have had an escape,' Lord Camden wrote, on the 10th of January, 'which, on account of the impression which it has made, I wish had not<sup>1797</sup> been owing so entirely to the winds. I should not deserve the confidence with which I am honoured if I did not apprise you that a universal discontent prevails here that a hostile fleet should have presumed to have insulted our coast for three weeks. They argue that a descent was to have been expected. They feel their situation much less tranquil if the French may think their fleet has been here so long unmolested by that of Great Britain. Great dissatisfaction is expressed at the conduct of the absentees, who have neither contributed in person nor by subscription to the defence of their country.'<sup>1</sup>

The second point on which the attempt at invasion had appeared to throw light was the disposition of the country. It had been represented as universally disaffected. Lord Camden wrote, on the 10th of January, that on the whole, 'reviewing what had passed, the best disposition had been shown. The regular troops had behaved excellently. The militia, so much dreaded, had not been backward. The Antrim regiments, which there was cause to suspect, had been specially forward. The Downshire men said they had seen their folly, and would fall in with their officers. Noblemen and gentlemen of large fortune had been employed in escorting baggage and

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, January 10, 1797. Secret.' S.P.O.

carrying expresses. Mr. John La Touche, the banker, a private in his son's corps, rode twenty-five miles in one of the severest nights with a message.' The merchants of Dublin, many of the first eminence, marched sixteen Irish miles with a convoy of arms to the North. A useful impression had been made on the minds of the lower Catholics by Dr. Moylan, Bishop of Cork. The Viceroy anticipated 'the best effects on the disaffected at home and the enemy abroad from the spirit which had been shown.'<sup>1</sup>

So far Lord Camden had spoken only of those who might naturally have been expected to exert themselves in the interest of order. But of the great revolutionary organisation said to pervade the island no signs had been outwardly visible. The people had shown a goodwill towards the troops. No advantage had been taken of the opportunity for local riots. Dalrymple, indeed, had confessed a fear that in the event of a reverse a different disposition might manifest itself. But it seemed impossible that the description which Wolfe Tone, Arthur O'Connor, and Lord Edward had given to the French Government of the reception on which they might calculate in Ireland could have resembled the fact. The British Cabinet especially, and English opinion generally, came to a conclusion that the Irish Government had been needlessly alarmed; that the discontent of which they had heard so much, so far as it was real, had been

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, January 10, 1797.'

created by the bigoted prejudices of the Castle Administration, and had been designedly exaggerated for the purposes of Protestant faction. <sup>1797</sup> They were misled, as the event proved, into a mischievous and even fatal delusion.

The revolutionary leaders in their subsequent confessions referred the conduct of the peasantry simply to the want of orders from head-quarters. The organisation had been deranged by the Belfast arrests. The appearance of the French was a surprise. The impression among the local committees was that the expedition had been postponed, or was not to be looked for till the spring. The insurrection was intended to be sudden; local independence of action had been strictly forbidden; and the French fleet had come and gone before it had been thoroughly understood to have arrived.

The explanation was correct as far as it went, but it was not the whole truth. It had been shown also that the mass of the people, if left to themselves, were not spontaneously disaffected to the British connection. As an agrarian conspirator the Irish peasant is effectively dangerous. He clings to his home and his land. He has a keen consciousness of injustice; and when the law has been his enemy he has not scrupled to avenge his own wrongs, often with the ferocity of a savage. Politically he allows himself to be worked upon by scoundrels who flatter his hopes and play upon his grievances. He talks, he shouts, he affects to conspire for a cause in which,

nevertheless, in his heart he has little belief, and for which, so long as he is left unplundered, in his heart he cares not at all. Political disaffection in Ireland has been the work, on the one hand, of the representatives of the old disinherited families—the Kernes and Gallowglasses of one age, the Rapparees of the next, the houghers and ravishers of a third; on the other, of the restless aspirations of the Catholic clergy, who refuse to live on even terms with other religious communities, who have compelled the so-called heretics to pare their claws and draw their teeth, and have then maddened themselves in secret by brooding over their imagined wrongs. On the back of these, and bred out of misgovernment, have come the political adventurers—the Lucases, the Floods, the Grattans, the Wolfe Tones, the O'Connells—who have used the discontent and oppression of their countrymen as instruments of a wild ambition after an impossible national independence; and working in a country where neglect and tyranny had gone hand in hand where laws were so unjust that Nature herself rejected them, and, where the people were singularly susceptible of rhetorical appeals to their emotions, these elements might and did create a state of things which appeared on the surface like universal national hostility.

The appearance was not the reality.

The peasant in the British army fights by the side of his Scotch and his English companions, and the enemy knows no difference between them, save that

where the fray is hottest the Irishman is first to the front. Enlisted in the police corps, he is the most loyal servant of order, and faces undis-<sup>1797</sup>mayed the fiercest frenzy of men of his own blood and creed. In the militia, in the approaching rebellion, the instinct of the soldier proved stronger than the seductions to which he seemed to have yielded. For the most part he was found true to his colours, if false to his nationalist oath. Physically brave, he is morally a coward. In his own cabin at home he sinks before the terrorism of the secret societies. He consents to be sworn, because he is marked for vengeance if he refuses. He will give no evidence in court, because he knows that the English Government cannot, or will not, protect him; while the power that will punish him is at his door. He clings to his creed and to his farm. The appeals of demagogues to his superstition, or their denunciations of his oppressors, make him drunk for the moment like whisky, and he becomes capable of the most horrible atrocities. But this is not his real nature. He is too shrewd to believe in the illusions with which he allows himself to play. So long as disloyalty can gain its end by the help of the assassin or the incendiary, there is a vile minority in Ireland who will shrink from no atrocity; and so long as he is himself treated with injustice, the peasant will look on with indifference or with secret sympathy. But he will fight in the field only in the ranks of a legitimate force, under orders from the officers of a lawful government. When left to his



own impulses he allows himself to be guided by his natural chief, the owner of the soil on which he lives. Let the law and the landlord become his friends indeed, and the instinct will then turn to active loyalty, and the field of Irish agitation will cease to yield a harvest.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SECESSION OF THE OPPOSITION.

## SECTION I.

**A** PARLIAMENTARY Opposition is the most finished product of modern political genius.

The functions of it are to teach people that <sup>1797</sup> they are ruled by men who are unfit for the position which they occupy, and are pursuing measures impolitic and mischievous. The Opposition is assumed by the theory to consist of persons who are the intellectual and moral equals of those whom they denounce, and are prepared to take their places, if they can persuade a majority in Parliament to agree with them. Men of ability and character will not advocate a cause which has not elements of justice and wisdom in it; and the result is, that either the two parties in the State must divide between them the principles of political administration, each when in power consciously regarding but half the truth—doing what it ought not to do, or leaving undone what it ought to do, to avoid trespassing upon its rival's province—or else each must of deliberate purpose blind one of its eyes, lay aside

its better knowledge, and consent to be a representative of passion, prejudice, and ignorance.

Each party also when in Opposition must assist in bringing Government itself into contempt by holding up those who hold the reins to public ridicule or detestation. Under the Plantagenets and Tudors differences of opinion between leading statesmen were confined to the Committee of Privy Council, which was composed of men of rank and intelligence, irrespective of the complexion of their views. The Cabinets of Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth contained Conservatives and Radicals, Anglicans and Puritans, Catholics and Protestants. Difficult questions were argued in private like the plan of a campaign in a council of war, and the passions and conceits of the multitude were not blown into a flame by hearing the measures taken by the Administration publicly reprobated by persons of accredited consideration. To the world outside the Government appeared undivided, and thus commanded the respect and submission which the rank and file of an army pay to their officers.

The public, no doubt, experience a general satisfaction when the debates of their rulers are submitted to their own judgment. They can test the abilities of their representatives; they can pass their own criticisms on the questions submitted for discussion; and at times when deeper passions are asleep, when the motives at work are the common forces of selfishness, and dangers are to be anticipated rather from the intrigues of individuals or of classes than from a false

choice of policy, the advantages of the modern system may for a time outweigh its evils.

As certainly in times of excitement, when reason is unseated by passion, and large masses of men become possessed with illusions under which, like sheep, they bleat but one senseless note, and can be <sup>1797</sup> driven in multitudes where any barking demagogue desires to misdirect them, a constitutional Opposition must be composed of materials different from any of which we have yet had experience, if it is not the most effective of the instruments of anarchy. It embarrasses the executive Government when it most requires discretionary liberty of action, and brings discredit upon it by unscrupulous abuse when its difficulties require most candid consideration. It encourages the hopes of fanatics and enthusiasts, provides madness with argument, and tells the incendiary and revolutionist that his objects are good, and are resisted only by selfishness and wickedness.

In no country and at no time could an Opposition in Parliament have worked more mischievously than in Ireland at the existing crisis. Grattan had sown the seeds of disorder by feeding the nation with hopes of an independence to which no political short-cut was possible. If Ireland was to be independent, the road towards it lay through order and industry, and practical energy and union. The liberties which she desired were for ever impossible so long as the passions were alive which he had stimulated by his fervid declamation. He had persuaded his Irish clients

that a millennium was only waiting for them till they had thrown off the authority and influence of England. They had gained step after step, yet the millennium was no nearer. As the direct power of England declined, English influence had become more all-pervading than ever. Their obvious conclusion was that they had not liberty enough; they must strike at the point where that influence was seated. They must have Parliamentary Reform; they must have Catholic Emancipation; they must place the power of the country where England would be unable to reach it; and independence would then be a reality. Mr. Grattan insisted, and perhaps he believed, that Ireland in complete possession of self-government would become a loyal member of the empire; but he had led the country to expect that with self-government her material misfortunes would give place to plenty and prosperity; and when this hope was disappointed, when, instead of prosperity and internal union, they found only internal quarrels and consequent increase of misery, was it not inevitable, had it not been the unvarying experience in the history of every revolutionary movement recorded, that when the millennium proved still an *ignis fatuus*, that when the hoped-for prosperity still hovered unobtained beyond the people's grasp, they would have carried Grattan's arguments to their natural conclusion, and have insisted on complete separation? The rule of England, Mr. Grattan told them, had been the source of all their woes. The rule was gone, but an English

Viceroy was still at the Castle; there was still the baneful connection under the Imperial Crown.

The reins would have been snatched by bolder <sup>1797</sup> hands, or Grattan himself would have been swept away in the torrent. The demand would have arisen that Ireland should be as free as America; and England must have either yielded to her own destruction or drawn the sword at last at a worse disadvantage than in 1690, when the control of the army and the police, and the internal functions of the executive authority of the State, had been allowed to pass out of her hands.

The United Irishmen had avowed from the beginning that Emancipation and Reform were but means with them towards a further end. The leading Catholics professed to be loyal; but every one who knew the genius of the Catholic Church knew also that when the power was in its hands it would be content with nothing short of complete ascendancy, and the ascendancy of a Catholic majority meant a return to the measures of King James's Parliament. The feeble and half-affected moderation of a few bishops and noblemen would have been but a bulwark of straw against the will of three million Celts clamouring for a restoration of the lands, and under these conditions the continuance of a shadowy connection between the islands could have been purchased only by acquiescence in a confiscation to which England could never consent without dishonour and degradation.

These consequences of the political measures which Grattan demanded were so obvious on the surface, and were so undisguisedly confessed as their real objects by the conspirators out of doors, that the Parliamentary Opposition, the Duke of Leinster and Lord Moira, the two Ponsonbies and Grattan, must be credited with weaker intellects than they possessed could they have been really blind to them. They probably considered that the war with France would fail, that democracy was to be in the ascendant over Europe, that Ireland was to achieve separation, and that it would be better arrived at constitutionally than through open rebellion. Grattan may have calculated that his services to the patriot cause would secure him the first place in the new Commonwealth which was to be added to the Sovereign States of Europe. Moira and Leinster may have hoped to secure their estates amidst the general wreck of the Protestant proprietary. Their more hot-headed and younger confederates were less able to wait for the slow process of a Parliamentary campaign, or perhaps the rule of proceeding continued as before. The Constitutional leaders were to persevere in pressing their demands through the legitimate channels, while agitators out of doors were to enforce their arguments by terrorism.

Arthur O'Connor had been one of the few persons who on the appearance of the French had passively if not actively opposed the enrolment of the Yeomanry. His loyalty had been reflected upon in a publication which he attributed to the Castle; and as

he had himself by his own subsequent confession personally invited the invasion, and was at that moment a member of the Executive Committee of United Irishmen, it must be admitted that he was not accused without reason. He could not afford at the moment to show his true colours. He had steady friends and supporters in the English Whigs, with whom it was necessary to keep on terms. The English Cabinet was known to be wavering in its Irish policy. He used the opportunity, therefore, to publish an open and insolent defiance of the Government at the Castle. He delivered himself, through a newspaper at Belfast, of an address to his fellow-citizens. 'In the conscious integrity of his heart' he repudiated the charge of disaffection. He represented himself as a martyr to the cause of the Catholics. He had been disinherited, he said, for his devotion to their interests by his uncle, Lord Longueville. Interpreting the future by his hopes, he described Great Britain as an ancient tyrant, now reeling to her ruin; and in a cataract of that fatal eloquence which hides truth from Irishmen, as coloured fireworks hide the stars, he thus addressed Lord Camden and Fitzgibbon and the other members of the Irish Executive:—

'Abandoned Administration, who have trampled on the liberties of my country, do you presume to accuse me of dissuading my countrymen from  
arming to oppose an invasion which your and your accomplices' crimes have provoked? Is it that the inalienable rights of free-born men to make their laws



by delegates of their choice should be bartered and sold by usurpers and traitors that I should persuade them to arm? Is it that our markets, our manufactures, our commerce, should be sold to that nation which appoints our Government and distributes our patronage, that I should persuade them to arm? Is it to support the Gunpowder Bill, which deprives them of arms, or the Convention Bill, that I should persuade them to arm? Is it to support the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Bill? Is it to rivet the bolts or guard the dungeons of their fellow-citizens, who, torn from their homes and families, vainly demand that trial by jury which, by proving their innocence, must establish its guilt, that I should persuade them to arm? Is it that a vile pander of national honour and legislative duty should be invested with uncontrolled power over the opinions and persons of an injured, gallant, and generous people, that I should persuade them to arm? Go, impotents, to the Catholics, whose elevated hopes of all glorious freedom you have been appointed to blast! Hence, contemptible Administration, from those you have insulted and levelled to those you have raised! Go to the monopolists of the representation of Ireland and ask them to arm. Go to the swarm of petty tyrants, perjured grand jury robbers, army-contractors, tithe-proctors, and land-sharks, and tell them how necessary it is for them to be armed. The Volunteers have been discouraged because they threw off the open and avowed dominion of Great Britain. These yeomen corps have been raised to support the

concealed deadly influence she has gained by corruption and treason.’<sup>1</sup>

The Administration might be impotent to arrest the progress of secret conspiracy, but it had spirit and power to resent the open insolence of Mr. O’Connor. It could not furnish him with the halter which was his due. He was not even suspected of having ventured into actual crime. But a public defiance, re-issued as it was in loose sheets, spread broadcast over the country, and showered from the galleries of the theatres, was not to be passed over, and the passionate patriot was provided with a lodging in the Birmingham Tower at Dublin Castle.

Sir Francis Burdett, who was O’Connor’s relative, made his arrest an occasion of a philippic in the British Parliament, characteristic both in its presumption and its ignorance of the tone of English Liberal politicians in speaking of Irish subjects.

‘One person,’ he said, in a savage invective against the Viceroy and the Chancellor, ‘now immured within the walls of a dungeon in Dublin Castle, I have the honour of being connected with, whom I know to be as incapable of treason towards his country (good God! that treason to Ireland and the name of O’Connor should be preposterously coupled together) as he is capable of everything that is generous and noble for his country’s good; a man whose private virtues equal,

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<sup>1</sup> See *Plowden*, vol. iv., Appendix 10, where there are ten pages of this rhodomontade.

they cannot surpass, the integrity of his public conduct. When such men become objects of fear and hatred to Government, it is not difficult to ascertain the nature of that Government.'

The reproaches which have been showered by historians on Lord Camden's government of Ireland are based on the same ignorance of fact which so grossly dictated the laudations bestowed by Sir Francis Burdett on the most worthless of Irish traitors. The ignorance has no longer an excuse, but the prejudice continues. The florid rhetoric of patriotic incendiaries has been so agreeable to the palate of modern Liberal philosophers, that the crimes and follies of the United Irishmen are forgotten in the spurious beauty of political sentimentalism. Public opinion upon Ireland has been formed by men

Whose virtue is  
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him,  
And curse that justice did it.

## SECTION II.

THE Constitutional friends of liberty were choosing their ground with more judgment, and using arguments more likely to receive attention. 1797

Arthur O'Connor had all but invited the Irish, in an open address, to ally themselves with France. Lord Moira used their apparent orderliness at the time of the invasion as a plea for a conciliatory policy. The Prince of Wales was induced to offer his services as Viceroy. Moira, supposing the time come for the rainbow to show itself, was prepared to attend him as Commander-in-Chief. The Prince submitted to Pitt an outline of the healing measures which his Irish advisers recommended; while Grattan and Ponsonby were denouncing, in the Irish House of Commons, the negligence which had exposed the country to a danger from which only accident had saved her, and were finding willing listeners.

The attack was made in various forms. It was urged plausibly that the ease with which the attempt had been made encouraged a repetition of it. Rumour said the armament was being refitted, and the chances of a second expedition were on every one's lips. It was alleged also, and with perfect truth, that the least confident of the Irish were encouraged by the fact that the French had actually come, and were venturing boldly and enthusiastically into the con-

spiracy.<sup>1</sup> The Government had affected to compliment the peasantry on their loyalty, as if they had depended on it beforehand, and had been justified in their confidence.

The Irish gentry, who knew better how the truth stood, were indignant at such idle folly. They were perfectly aware that if Hoche had landed with his entire force, Dalrymple must have been overwhelmed, Cork would have been taken, the whole of Ireland would have been in arms. Where, it was angrily asked, had been the vaunted British fleet? and the answers did not tend to allay uneasiness. Admiral Colpoys ought to have been outside Brest with fifteen sail of the line. For some unknown cause he had been off his post when Hoche slipped out; and when he found Hoche was gone, instead of following him, he had gone up Channel to Portsmouth. It was reported at the Admiralty on the 20th of December that the French expedition had sailed. Lord Bridport was at Spithead with the Channel fleet. He might have joined Colpoys and gone in pursuit, and the east wind would have carried him to Bantry in forty hours. But as late as the 26th the Cabinet was incredulous. On the 27th the wind had gone round, a westerly gale was blowing, and he could not leave his anchorage.

This was small consolation to Ireland. The sheet-anchor of her safety had failed at the hour of need.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Evidence of Dr. MacNeven.'—'Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords, 1798.'

To secure protection for the future, either, it was argued, there must be concession to the Catholics, and the pretext for disaffection must be removed, or the military force must be increased. Parliament must vote additional taxes. Private gentlemen must strain their embarrassed fortunes in raising Yeomanry. Especial bitterness was felt against the noble lords and gentlemen who, drawing their incomes from Ireland, were spending them in London, and contributing nothing, either in purse or person, to the public defence. If new taxes were to be laid on, what more proper than an absentee tax? Such a tax was certain to be proposed should Government ask for more money, and Camden wrote to Portland for instructions how to act towards a measure 'which would be very unpleasant to the feelings of the absentees.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord Shannon, Lord Ely, Lord Waterford, vehemently pressed it. The best men in the country, the most active friends of Government, as Camden admitted, were in its favour. 'The impolitic backwardness of the absentees in not stepping forward with decision and liberality in the late alarm had added a feeling of resentment to the sense of public injury.'

Mr. Vandeleur at length brought the subject forward formally, and proposed a tax of two shillings in the pound on the net produce of the absentee rents. As a speaker he was unequal to what was called 'influencing the debate,' but no one ever spoke more truth in

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, February 20, 1797.'

the Irish Parliament. 'All the disturbances which had taken place there, which had disgraced its character and checked its growth,' he accurately declared to 'have been found to commence on the lands of absentees.' Had they been resident, as they ought to have been, their authority as landlords would have prevented disorder, and acts of kindness would have removed the temptation to it. 'A tax,' Mr. Vandeleur said, 'which would compel the landowners to return to their duties would do more to tranquillise Ireland than all the repressive laws which Parliament could devise.'

Sir John Macartney considered a tax of two shillings in the pound to be too small. The injury done by the absentees to Ireland he regarded as greater than any contribution which could be laid upon them would equal, and he proposed to raise the two shillings to four.

Some friend of the absentees argued that a man had a natural right to choose the place where he would live. Mr. Smith replied that society of its very nature was a restriction of natural rights. The poor man had as much natural right to eat his salt untaxed as the rich landowner to spend his rents in luxuries at a distance from his estates.

Here once more the deepest of the real wounds of Ireland was opened. The Ponsonbies stayed away from the debate. Grattan supported the tax, but feebly and without spirit, being 'tied,' as Lord Camden said, 'to Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Bessborough, and the Duke of Devonshire.' These noble advocates of the cause of

the people were themselves the greatest criminals against the people; and the patriotic orators, whose business was with imaginary wrongs, were languid and apathetic when genuine evils were taken in hand.<sup>1</sup> Their coolness and indifference would not have obstructed the Bill. The better mind of Ireland had declared itself, and the Viceroy himself confessed that the non-residence of landowners was the true cause of all that was amiss. 'The absentees,' he admitted, were bound to visit their estates, 'to expose themselves to the duty by which they held their property and their situation in the country:'<sup>2</sup> but his orders from England were to prevent the passing of a measure which would have irritated powerful interests in both Houses of the British Parliament. Ireland was sacrificed that Pitt's majority might not be weakened, and the supporters of the Castle with bitterness at heart were required to vote against their consciences and against what they knew to be right.

The United Irish agitation was carried on with renewed energy. 'The appearance of the French had given the conspirators fresh courage.'<sup>3</sup> Several of the arrested leaders were released for want of producible evidence to detain them. The places of others were filled up. There was to be no second failure, as, indeed, if the French had landed, there would probably have been no failure at all. Connaught and

<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 1.' S.P.O.

<sup>3</sup> 'Camden to Portland, January 30.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Camden to Portland, Mar. 9.'



Munster were vigorously organised. So dangerous  
in January was the state of Ulster, that the  
1797 greater part of it was placed under the Insurrec-  
tion Act and proclaimed. 'A system of terror had been  
established' to paralyse the law; and the Viceroy  
found himself obliged, as he said, notwithstanding the  
outcry that was certain to be raised, 'to show the loyal  
and well-disposed that the Government was the  
stronger party.' The Orangemen had been severely  
checked in deference to Grattan's clamours. The dis-  
affected peasants and artisans had gathered courage  
from the suppression of the only body whom they  
really feared, and assassination became the law of  
the province. Murder had followed murder. In the  
middle of the winter Mr. Comyn, an active magistrate  
at New Town Ards, was shot. In February a Donegal  
farmer was shot, as a lesson to others for enlisting  
in the Yeomanry. The sacrifice of the next victim,  
from his character and position, attracted keener  
attention. Dr. Hamilton, a Fellow of Trinity and  
rector of a living near Lough Swilly, had given  
offence by exerting himself in detecting crime. He  
had been shot at once unsuccessfully. One night at  
the end of the same month he was dining at the house  
of a Mr. Waller, when a party of ruffians who had  
marked him down burst into the room. Hamilton,  
hearing them coming, had escaped for the moment  
through a side-door. Mr. Waller being a cripple and  
unable to move, his brave wife threw herself in front  
of him; three shots were fired at her, and she fell

dead. The men then swore they would burn the house and kill every one that was in it if Dr. Hamilton was not produced. His servants betrayed his hiding-place. He was seized and forced out of the house. He clutched at the staple of the hall-door. One of the villains held a candle to his hand to make him loose his hold. He was then dragged upon the lawn, thrown upon his knees, and piked.

‘It is the system of the United Irishmen,’ wrote Camden, in telling this story, ‘to prevent the magistrates from acting. The unanimous opinion of the country is that mild measures cannot eradicate the evil, and that if the French land it cannot be in a worse state than it is at present. I have therefore ordered General Lake to disarm the districts where such excesses have been committed, to establish patrols, take up those who assemble at night, prevent assemblies, and not suffer the cause of justice to be frustrated by the delicacy which might possibly have actuated the magistracy.’ ‘If,’ Camden continued, ‘I thought the United Irishmen’s measure of reform in Parliament was really the remedy, and if reform could be made without shaking the connection between the kingdoms, it might be wiser in the King’s Ministers to consider whether the attempt should be made. But reform is only a popular question under which to shelter the treason which they are plotting and executing, and it would be weakness to be deceived by the pretended cause of their discontent. If Reform is resisted, the kindred subject of Catholic Emancipa-

tion must be resisted also. The success of either of these questions would shake to the foundation the English interest, and as long as the present system of governing Ireland is adopted they ought not to be entertained. If a better can be devised—and there are many grievances to which the peculiar situation of this island is subject—it will be to be considered how those grievances should be remedied; but, while the war lasts, great and alarming discontent will appear, and must be assuaged by the vigour of the Government and the attention of the gentry.’<sup>1</sup>

1797 General Lake, who was entrusted with the duty of taking away the arms from the mutinous and murderous conspirators of Ulster, became afterwards Lord Lake of Delhi and the conqueror of the Mahrattas. He had already distinguished himself in the American war and in Holland. He was an officer of singular moderation and humanity, and a better selection could not have been made for the discharge of a delicate duty, in which mistake or excessive severity would be visited instantly by the most factious animadversion. On the 13th of March he sent out a proclamation from Belfast that daring outrages were being perpetrated in many parts of the province with the deliberate purpose of superseding the laws by terror. The civil power was defied. Loyal subjects who had enrolled themselves as Yeomanry under the King’s commission were mur-

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Camden to Portland, March 9.’ S. P. O.

dered; the interposition of the army had become necessary for the protection of the well-disposed; and Lake, therefore, gave notice that he had received authority to act as the public safety might require. He enjoined all persons, peace officers and soldiers excepted, to bring in their arms and surrender them. He expressed a hope that immediate compliance would render the use of force unnecessary. He entreated the disaffected to consider the misery which they were provoking. He invited the loyal to act with energy and spirit, and assured them of protection. He promised informers reward and inviolable secrecy if they would indicate where arms and ammunition were concealed.<sup>1</sup>

Grattan declared in Parliament that such a proclamation was a subversion of the Constitution. He did not care to inquire whether the powers of the Constitution could be abused to protect a deliberate and avowed conspiracy to overthrow it by force. In a country where a second secret authority had been established superior to law, and enforced its orders by assassinating the officers of the legitimate Government, the executive servants of the Crown, who had hesitated to use the powers committed to them to put down so audacious a usurpation, would have deserved to be stigmatized as poltroons, and punished as traitors themselves. Mr. Grattan was hard to please. The Lords Justices of 1641 were

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<sup>1</sup> Proclamation of General Lake, March 13, 1797.

accused of having permitted the rebellion to break out when they foresaw it coming, as an excuse for spoliation and confiscation. Lord Camden was accused of provoking the rebellion of 1798 by using force to disarm a population who were preparing, without concealment, for open insurrection.

Irish conspirators have never wanted traitors among them. Unennobled by true or generous purpose, without heart for the open field of courage and honour, and pursuing their ends with the assassin's dagger and the incendiary's torch, they cannot impart a temper which they do not possess; and therefore, in their committees and lodges, there were always men who were ready to sell a dangerous secret, when the Government was willing to purchase it and would undertake to protect them from publicity. General Lake found ample assistance of this infamous kind. He was able rapidly to make a second arrest of two of the leading committees of Belfast, and to seize papers which revealed the correspondence with France, the extent of the revolutionary armament, and the measures taken for the seduction of the army and militia. The papers were sent to Dublin, and were laid immediately before a secret committee of the House of Commons. The prisoners were indicted at the Spring Assizes at Armagh, and were acquitted either for want of evidence or through the cowardice of the juries. Lake, however, went on with his work in the search for arms, and seized in all fifty thousand muskets, twenty-two cannon, and seventy thousand

pikes, Lord Moira's estate being one of the principal arsenals. The seizures were not effected without severity. Men who had provided themselves with arms with a serious purpose did not part with them in answer to a mere request. Where pikes and muskets were known to be concealed their existence was fiercely denied. Entire villages combined in determined resistance. Individuals of whose guilty complicity secret information left no shadow of doubt were compelled to reveal the hiding-places by the whip and the picket. Houses were burnt, and families were exposed to serious suffering. Particular officers, it is likely, exceeded their orders. The officers of the Yeomanry were taken from the local gentry, whom the murder system had not disposed to feel tenderly towards the accomplices of assassins. In some very few instances the innocent may have been confounded with the criminal. When society is disorganised, and peace can only be preserved by the strong hand, such misfortunes occur inevitably, and the responsibility for them rests with those who have rendered the use of force indispensable. But the result was that in the part of Ireland where the populace was most dangerous, and the insurgent organisation most complete, the teeth of the rebellion were drawn.

## SECTION III.

'THE disarming of Ulster furnished a ready occasion for Parliamentary declamation. The offer of <sup>1797</sup> the Prince of Wales had been declined. Lord Moira had not achieved his desired position of Commander-in-Chief. But as a private peer he could still do his friends a service in his place in the British House of Lords. Calling attention to General Lake's proceedings, he moved an address to the King to interpose his paternal authority in behalf of his afflicted children. He described them as being exasperated into rebellion by gratuitous and barbarous tortures.

The objects of the United Irishmen were no secret to him, for many of them were his special friends; yet he dared to say that the Irish Government were victims of an illusion. Their fears were chimerical; the people were innocent of evil design. 'Kindness,' he declared, 'was all that was needed to call forth that fond affection of the inhabitants of Ireland to England which circumstances could cloud, but could not extinguish.'

Moira had the support of the whole Opposition. The Duke of Bedford insisted that Fitzwilliam should be replaced. Fox, in the House of Commons, rang the changes on the same note, demanding the staple

measures of 'conciliation'—Reform and Emancipation.

Pitt answered, with effective satire, that under the Constitution of '82 the British Parliament had no longer a right to interfere in the internal <sup>1797</sup> government of Ireland; and that to remodel the Irish Constitution in the existing state of the world would be an experiment too rash to be ventured.

In England Pitt was supported by the common sense of both Houses. In Ireland, where the blood was hotter, the battle was fiercer. At Grattan's instance a meeting of the Dublin freeholders was held in the Exchange, to petition the King for Lord Camden's removal. The resolution was carried, with the help of the mob, who were introduced into the building, and it was presented to the Viceroy himself for transmission. In the Irish House of Commons Mr. Grattan, in one of the most passionate of his speeches, denounced Lake and all that he was doing, and accused Camden of violating the laws. A debate followed, or series of debates, in which the forces of the two parties were arrayed in fiery antagonism.

Grattan thundered his loudest. De Blaquiére rebuked him for misusing his great abilities in encouraging anarchy. The Government were embarrassed by the nature of their information, and could not produce a tithe of the evidence which they possessed; but when magistrates were being assassinated and peaceful and loyal citizens were robbed unjustly of their arms, the Attorney-General turned to scorn



the pretence that the conspiracy was unreal. 'Was the Government to sit by and suffer such things?' he asked. 'Were they to wait till the fire was lighted, and the whole country had burst into flame?'

The Prime-Sergeant, Fitzgerald, said desperate cases must be met with desperate remedies. If the French invaded the South again, and the army was forced to collect to encounter them, was Ulster to be left in a condition to rise in their rear?

The sensitive vanity of Irish patriotism showed itself especially in abuse of England. Ponsonby complained of the contempt felt by England for the Irish. Lord Sheffield, it seems, had consulted Gibbon on some Irish question. Gibbon had answered, 'While I am engaged in writing the History of the Decline and Fall of a great empire I have neither leisure nor inclination to attend to the affairs of a remote petty province.' 'Remote!' exclaimed Ponsonby, 'and sixty miles distant. Petty! The whole kingdom of Ireland! It is useful to cure this habit in the people of England.'

Ireland ought to learn that she will be respected when she deserves respect, and that till then respect for her is impossible. The debate degenerated into personalities. Egan, once a patriot of the patriots and a supporter of Fitzwilliam, but now in the service of the Crown, told the Opposition that if they would not work at the pumps they ought not to increase the leak; and, with an evident allusion to Grattan, said that 'a man who overlooked the dangers of his

country, and thought only of his own diminished influence, deserved the guillotine.'

Egan, after his manner, had spoken coarsely and roughly. Grattan rose, and, after taunting him with deserting his party, said, 'The honourable gentleman spoke of cutting off my head, and that in a manner so peculiarly his own, in the fury and whirlwind of his passion, that though I did not see the guillotine, methought I saw the executioner.'

'I will have no allusions made to me with impunity,' roared Egan. 'No little duodecimo volume shall discharge its contents at my character and person without meeting the treatment it deserves. I would have the honourable gentleman know that no part of the support I gave Lord Fitzwilliam was directed to him. When he was in the zenith of his power, and strutted in pigmy consequence about the Castle, I avoided his intimacy. I once admired his talents; but when I reflect on the acrimony and inflammation which he has since poured on the popular mind, when I reflect on the mischief his doctrines have created, I see that he has done away his services, and betrayed his country, to his own disappointment.'

Again Grattan rose, the wild Irishman showing as in a dissolving view through the Parliamentary decorum.

'The honourable gentleman's swaggering,' he said, 'is no indication either of talent or spirit. I have read somewhere—'

An angry fool's a very harmless thing.

The folly of his paroxysms and the blockheadism of his fury are too ridiculous to excite serious notice. I smile at them. The honourable gentleman in his contortions represented to my mind the idea of a black soul writhing in torments, and his language is like that of a certain description of the fair sex, whom in manner and language he seems desirous to imitate.' <sup>1</sup>

Neither eloquence nor invective could hold together Grattan's Parliamentary following. . . In a House of 143, sixteen members only supported him on a division against the Castle measures.

Four days later George Ponsonby renewed the attack, and moved the repeal of the Insurrection Act. His object was no longer to persuade the Parliament, but to inflame the people out of doors. He described England as struggling hopelessly with the French giant. He pictured the attitude of Ireland as a magnificent spectacle of determination to submit no longer to tyranny. The Irish, he said, demanded liberty, 'and liberty they would have, if not at the hand of England, then from France.' <sup>2</sup>

There was a second display of oratorical fireworks; Grattan brilliant, as he always was, Curran sparkling with wit; the fine speaking all on one side, truth and good sense upon the other. The same majority which defeated Grattan defeated Ponsonby. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, March, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, March 24.

<sup>3</sup> The inability of the Patriots to understand the real sores of Ire-

land was as conspicuous as their fury with the imaginary ones. In an interval of this debate Sir John Blaquiére recalled attention to the

Parliament was firm, both in England and Ireland. In the English Cabinet, however, the same influence was still at work which had led to the appointment of Fitzwilliam. The Government refused to let the Opposition dictate to them, but were themselves still wavering, and Camden could obtain no help in the form of additional troops, and no definite encouragement. At the secret prompting of their English friends, Lord Kenmare, Lord Fingal, and other Catholics whose loyalty was unquestionable, presented a petition for Emancipation. The Viceroy, in transmitting the demand, showed that he was aware of, and that he acutely felt, the uncertain position in which he was placed. The quiet and good behaviour of the peasantry at the invasion had affected Portland and affected Pitt. Camden said that his

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Foundling Hospital, the condition of which he had exposed some years before. A committee of inquiry had reported that out of 2,200 children annually received into the Hospital, 1,900 disappeared unaccounted for. Blaquiere had twice attempted to introduce a measure for a change of management. The first time he was opposed by Grattan. The second time 'his bill was lost by the unaccountable apathy of gentlemen who could not be brought to give it support.' Having been unsuccessful in his efforts, he had hoped that the publicity of their misdeeds would have shamed the governing body into attention. He had lately,

however, he said, been again invited to take up the subject in the interests of humanity; and, on inquiry, he had found that the same mortality continued. Out of 540 children received into the house between December 1795 and March 1796, 473 were murdered by negligence. The loss of life had been concealed in the formal returns. On the books three deaths alone had been entered, and the truth was only brought out on a strict examination. Blaquiere said he had personally inspected the hospital, and in one instance had found fourteen children thrust away into a garret to die.—*Irish Debates*, April 12, 1797.

own opinion remained unchanged. If the Cabinet disagreed with him, however, he entreated that no consideration for him should be allowed to embarrass them. He was heartily willing to retire.<sup>1</sup>

The severities of the North had been much descanted on, he wrote a few days later, on receiving a copy of Lord Moira's speech; his own doubt was whether, if the policy of severity was right, the measures adopted had been severe enough. The alternative was to grant a boon to disaffected people, the want of which they pretended was the cause of their discontent, but no moderate concession would satisfy either the Northern Reformers or the Catholics. There were objections to the present Constitution, but as long as the two countries were connected Ireland must be governed by an English party. The Catholics could not be admitted without a change in all the establishments in the country, and to make such a change in the existing humour of men seemed to him impossible. Conciliation, therefore, by those methods was not in his opinion to be thought of, and meanwhile murder and terrorism could not be permitted.<sup>2</sup> He could encourage no hope that the conspiracy would be suppressed without bloodshed, but he insisted that the responsibility was with the United Irishmen; that in his measures of coercion he was not attacking opinion, but a deliberate design of revolution;

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 23.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> '*Ibid.*, April 3.' Abridged. S.P.O.

and in proof of his words he enclosed a statement which had been secretly made to him by a member of the Military Committee of the society, that the cry of Reform was a mere blind; 'that a total separation from England and the establishment of a Republic was the sole object of the conspirators; that they had a plan to surprise the army in one night all over the kingdom.'<sup>1</sup>

The Duke of Leinster now took upon himself to add to Lord Camden's difficulties, with the object, perhaps, of forcing him to resign. On the 25th of April he informed the Viceroy that he could no longer be a passive spectator of his country's sufferings. He did not hold himself responsible either to Lord Camden or to any one in the kingdom, but he thought proper to inform him that he intended to invite the county of Kildare to join him in a petition to the King to change the Government.'

The Dublin mob had set an example which the Duke of Leinster did not think it unbecoming to follow. Camden, embarrassed as he was, could not venture to resent the Duke's insolence, but begged humbly for a few minutes' conversation. The Duke desired leave to decline the honour for his mind was made up.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, April 15.'—The informer in this instance was a miniature-painter, named Nevile. This man added one remark in his deposition which is extremely characteristic: 'In Down they are pretty well disciplined.'

Not so in Belfast. The idea of the United Irishmen was that discipline was not necessary. They needed only to give one fire, and rush on with the bayonet, like the French.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Correspondence with the

Two murders followed in April, of a clergyman and a magistrate in Meath. At the beginning of May the Secret Committee of the House of Commons, which was still sitting and collecting evidence, received information which, if true, made the situation appear almost desperate.

'It is with the utmost alarm,' Camden wrote on the 6th of May, 'that the Committee have <sup>1797</sup> heard that on Sunday se'nnight Mr. Edward Byrne <sup>1</sup> and Doctor Troy <sup>2</sup> appear to have been sworn of the Society of United Irishmen, as well as about sixty priests. The person who gave the information had seen several of the Kilkenny and Kildare Militia sworn. When the intelligence is confirmed by accounts from the other parts of Ireland, it is impossible to deny that confidence to a testimony of the kind which its extraordinary tendency would otherwise induce me to pause upon. The Committee urge my impressing the necessity of a force being sent to this kingdom more to be relied upon than its own soldiers. It is really my opinion that an insurrection may take place any day, and the dreadful effect of its success if it could be attained must fill the minds of his Majesty's servants with infinite uneasiness and alarm.'<sup>3</sup>

On the back of these communications from Ireland

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Duke of Leinster. Enclosed by  
Camden to Portland, April 28.  
S.P.O.

<sup>1</sup> Late Chairman of the Catho-  
lic Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Archbishop of Dub-  
lin.

<sup>3</sup> 'Camden to Portland, May  
6.' S.P.O.

came the mutiny of the British fleet. First at Portsmouth, and then at the Nore, the seamen, exasperated at official inattention to their complaints, deposed their officers and seized the ships, and for six weeks such a storm appeared to have overtaken England as had never before touched her in the darkest hour of her fortunes. No Irish element was visible in the demands of the mutineers. Yet it was singular that to corrupt the fleet with the help of the Irish seamen had been a favourite idea of M. de la Croix. Though Tone at first listened coldly, he afterwards caught the notion with enthusiasm. Half the sailors and petty officers in the service were Catholics, and in fact it was discovered, when the causes of the mutiny were inquired into, that the United Irishmen had been busy instruments in inflaming discontent. Lee, who was one of the leaders, had been sworn to the society in Dublin, and had enlisted but a few months previously, 'probably with a view to create the mutiny for which he was condemned.'<sup>1</sup> Wolfe Tone, in a published address, had invited his fellow-countrymen to use an opportunity to make themselves masters of the ships, and he promised them as a bribe the plunder of English commerce. The Secret Committee of the British House of Commons discovered that the crews had been largely sworn to be true to Ireland, to erect a Catholic Government there, and 'to be faithful to

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<sup>1</sup> 'E. Cooke to Mr. Greville, July 4, 1797.' S.P.O.



their brethren who were fighting their cause against tyrants and oppressors.' There had been plans among them to carry different ships into Irish harbours, to kill the officers if they hindered them, and to hoist the green flag, with the harp in the place of the British ensign, and afterwards kill and destroy the Protestants.<sup>1</sup>

The mutiny gave the French an opportunity for which they had looked so earnestly. The sea was open; the fleets at Brest and in the ports of Holland had six weeks in which they could have gone where they pleased without danger of being fought with. The seamen at the Nore had not returned to their duty till the 15th of June, and those in England best able to form an opinion were expecting daily to hear that Hoche was again on the coast of Ireland.<sup>2</sup> Under these circumstances the resolution of the Cabinet gave way. Pitt and Dundas recurred to the hopes with which they had played, and Portland wrote to tell Lord Camden that he must 'weigh and consider whether means could not be devised to reconcile the Catholics, bring their support to the Establishment, and dissolve the unnatural coalition between them and the Dissenters.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Secret Committee of Commons. England. 1799.

<sup>2</sup> 'Unless the business of the fleet can be speedily adjusted, a few days must place a French army in

Ireland.—Cornwallis to General Ross, May 9, 1797.'—*Cornwallis Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 326.

<sup>3</sup> 'Portland to Camden, May 13, 1797.' S.P.O.

The Secret Committee of the Irish House of Commons had at that moment completed their report, and Camden, for answer, sent it over for the Cabinet's perusal. The designs of the United <sup>1797</sup> Irishmen had been unravelled from their origin. The political reforms which they had demanded had been pursued avowedly as a means of disuniting Ireland from England and establishing a Republic, and by the side of the political agitation the leaders had made preparations for rebellion to take advantage of the confusion and excitement which must, under any circumstances, accompany a change in the Constitution: They had a hundred thousand men secretly organised and officered. Notwithstanding Lake's exertions they had still large quantities of arms. They had a revenue, the last quarter of which had been collected before the usual time, in anticipation of a French landing. The magistrates were held in terror by a secret tribunal of assassination, and efforts were made in all parts of the island to seduce and corrupt the soldiers.

'You ask,' said Camden, 'whether his Majesty should be advised to accede to a concession which is made the excuse of rebellion. Rebellion must first be overcome. It will afterwards be to be considered how the country is to be governed. As to what you say of disuniting Catholics and Dissenters, it appears to me to be merely an expedient to divert a present danger, and that the country must either be governed according to its present system, or a change more extensive must be

adopted. I cannot conceal how melancholy a presage I consider the system to which we appear to have been forced, of yielding to the demands of persons who have arms in their hands.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, May 18.' Abridged. S.P.O.

## SECTION IV.

THE Secret Committee spoke of attempts to seduce the troops. Those attempts had been so successful that four of the Monaghan and two of the Wexford Militia were tried and shot as an example to the rest. They spoke of the existence of an assassination tribunal. While they were preparing their report, sentence of death had gone out against Lord Carhampton, the Commander-in-Chief, who next to the Chancellor was the best-hated man in Ireland. So long as Luttrell was at the head of the army the rebel leaders knew that their game would be dangerous. Luttrell, therefore, was to be taken away. The interesting gentlemen who were dreaming of making themselves masters of Ireland were not growing more true to each other as the melodrama developed itself. A member of the Assassination Committee, James Ferris, was in Carhampton's pay, and gave him notice that his death had been determined on. A meeting had been held to talk the subject over. A blacksmith named Dunn had volunteered his services; and being one of Carhampton's tenants, born on his estate, living at his gate, in constant employment about his house, and so thoroughly trusted that he had access to the grounds at Luttrell's Town at all hours, he was welcomed as well fitted for his work. Already he had given proof of his qualifications. He had himself been the murderer, as he

confessed afterwards, of two obnoxious persons to whom Carhampton had given shelter, and who had been found dead in the park.

The day fixed for the death of the Commander-in-Chief was Sunday, the 14th of May. Luttrell was in the habit of driving out from Dublin to his house on Sunday mornings. He carried pistols, and was known to be a cool and certain shot. The assassin proposed to follow the carriage on horseback, with three or four companions armed with blunderbuses, fire a volley of slugs into the windows at Luttrell and his aide-de-camp, and then shoot the postillion and the servants. If the plan failed, a bold villain, named Farrell, said that he would kill Carhampton in the street single-handed.

Ferris consenting, contrary to general experience, to give evidence in court, there was no occasion to wait till the assassin could be caught in the act. Dunn and several others were arrested; and Carhampton, knowing the man so intimately, visited him in his cell, and inquired the meaning of such a return for his past kindness. Carhampton, with all his experience, confessed himself astonished at the coolness of the answer. The man, who had been in his own service from his childhood, told him he considered it would be a meritorious act to kill him, and acknowledged frankly that he had meant to do it with his own hand. A second time Carhampton went to see him, accompanied by Lord Enniskillen. Dunn was on his knees praying when they entered.

He repeated his confession without a sign of contrition. As it was not impossible that the man might spring on him, Carhampton on these occasions had his pistols with him. The third time on which he saw him he had nearly reason to regret that he had omitted the same precaution. The prisoner was then unfettered, walking in the yard. His demeanour was changed. He denied all that he had confessed, swore he was falsely accused, and swaggered up so close and so menacingly to his visitor that Luttrell bade him sharply to keep off, struck him across the face with a switch, and laid his face open. He was tried; and though Curran as his advocate did his best to discredit the approver's testimony, was convicted and hanged.<sup>1</sup>

The blindest enthusiast for Irish liberty must now have been aware of the spirit with which the Government had to reckon. The occasion of the conspiracy to kill Carhampton was appropriately selected by the Ponsonbies and Grattan for their last effort in Parliament. They knew that their friends in England were working upon the Cabinet, and they knew that the Cabinet was undecided. The mutiny in the fleet was at its height. Any hour might bring news that a French squadron was in the Shannon or in Lough Swilly. On the 15th of May, George Ponsonby brought forward a series of resolutions in the House of Commons—that all religious disabilities must be abolished; that it was the indispensable right of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Trial of James Dunn.'—*State Trials*, vol. xxvi.

people of Ireland to be fully and freely represented in Parliament; that the Constitution must be remodelled, the country must be divided into electoral districts of six thousand houses each, and every district must return two members.

Camden had to act on his own responsibility, without the support from England which at such a moment the Cabinet was bound to have extended to him. By their own intolerable folly in 1782 and in 1789 the Protestant Parliament of Ireland had set the agitation rolling of which they were now discovering the meaning. They had taught English statesmen to know that they were not to be depended on; and though the Cabinet declined to force them to strike their colours, they left them to gather the bitter harvest of their infatuation, and deal as they could with the wild spirit which they had let loose. They had insisted on the exclusive right to manage their own affairs. Pitt was taking them at their word, forgetting that he and Dundas had contributed their own share to the present danger in forcing on the concessions of '93.

At this moment Fitzgibbon was the sustaining genius of the Irish Administration. He had himself from the first foreseen the issue to which the fine talk of independence was tending. Lord Camden, undirected from home, consented to be guided by the one man whose advice had never been neglected without penalties, or followed without being justified in the result.

Ponsonby's motion was felt to be a final effort. The debate lasted through the night and long after the risen sun was shining through the windows. Pelham declared for the Government that, with the report of the Committee in his hands, he would not consent to launch Ireland on a career of revolution. As the argument proceeded it appeared more and more clearly that the neutrality of England would not affect the result, and that the resolutions would be rejected by an enormous majority.

Grattan spoke last, the stream which the world calls eloquence flowing like a mountain torrent, metaphor and simile flashing like prismatic colours in the spray. Towards the end he fell into a tone of prophetic solemnity. He affected a conviction that the Government policy must fail, the resolutions must eventually be carried, and that for himself and his friends nothing remained but to wash their hands, like Pilate. 'You argue,' he said, 'that you can neither emancipate the Catholics nor reform the Constitution till the insurrection is put down. You cannot put it down. Coercion has failed; the war against democracy has failed. The evil has only been made worse. Agitation, once insignificant, has been able to influence every county in the kingdom, to levy an army, to provide arms and ammunition. As coercion has advanced the United Irishmen have advanced. The measures taken to disarm have armed them; to make them weak and odious have made them powerful and popular. What remains, then, but to try our plan and reform the



Parliament? You say you must subdue before you reform. Alas! you think so. But you forget that you subdue by reforming. It is the best conquest you can obtain over your own people. Suppose you succeed, what is your success?—a military Government. And what may be the consequence of such a victory?—a separation. Suppose the war continues, and your conquest interrupted by a French invasion, what will be your situation then?’

Was Grattan sincere in pretending to believe that the United Irishmen would be subdued by reform? Did Grattan suppose that the war with the Revolution would fail? that France would triumph? that England this time was going finally upon the rock, and had no second rally before her as she had rallied after losing America? Who can tell? This only he found indisputably, that his power over the House of Commons of Ireland was gone; and having made the discovery, he concluded with shaking himself free of further connection with a body to which he had once considered it his proudest achievement to have committed the destinies of his country.

‘We have offered you our measure,’ he said. ‘You will reject it. We deprecate yours. You will persevere. Having no hope left to persuade or dissuade, and having discharged our duty, we shall trouble you no more, and from this day we shall not attend the House of Commons.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Debates*, May 15, 16, 1797.

As the echo of the words died away the House divided. Of two hundred members present a hundred and seventy supported Lord Camden. Grattan and his followers seceded, and the Parliamentary Opposition of Ireland died by its own hand.

The peril of the situation was scarcely increased. The Constitutional channel for the discharge of incendiary rhetoric was closed at least on one side of the Channel, and the Government was left free to deal with the problem out of doors. Lord Camden had to encounter enemies as unscrupulous as they were cowardly and cruel. Enthusiasts for popular rights, if unwise, are usually honourable, and in the absence of other virtues are rarely without courage and truthfulness. The United Irishmen pursued their object through secret murder and open lying. General Lake had been doing his work in the North with as much tenderness as was compatible with his duty. The Revolutionary Committee of Belfast published a manifesto against him on the 14th of April, in which they invited the universe to be a witness of their wrongs.

Their fellow-citizens, they said, 'were confined in Bastiles; their wives and daughters were made the daily victims of a licentious foreign soldiery.'<sup>1</sup> The Government accused them of horrid crimes. The

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<sup>1</sup> These charges were examined into in the following year by a Committee of the House of Com- mons, and it was found 'that the search for arms had been conducted with all possible mildness.'

Government, in reality, was endeavouring to goad them into rebellion by premeditated cruelty. For the sake of their country they had endured hitherto their unparalleled sufferings, but a time was approaching when forbearance might be a crime. Should they ever be roused, the armies of United Ireland would trample their oppressors into dust. They appealed to the 'national armed force,' the Militia. They appealed to the Yeomanry. They appealed to the British nation. They appealed to the great Father of Mankind to look upon their wrongs and redress them.

To this language Lord Camden replied on the day after Grattan's secession, giving the Committee an opportunity to make good their words:—

'Whereas there exists in this kingdom a traitorous  
1797 conspiracy by persons calling themselves United  
Irishmen to subvert the authority of his Majesty  
and Parliament, and to destroy the Constitution. And  
whereas, for the execution of these wicked designs  
they have planned open violence, and formed secret  
arrangements for raising, arming, and paying a dis-  
ciplined force, plundered houses of arms, cut down  
trees for pike-handles, have attempted to disarm the  
Yeomanry, and fired on his Majesty's troops. It is  
now necessary to use the utmost powers with which  
Government is by law entrusted for the suppression  
of such traitorous attempts. And whereas the exertion  
of the civil power has proved ineffectual, We, the  
Lord-Lieutenant and Council, determined to suppress  
such attempts, and desirous to prevent the evil-disposed

or misled from falling into dangers to which ignorance may expose them, do forewarn all men from entering into the said societies. We charge all persons having knowledge of those meetings to give information of them; and as it has become necessary to employ military force, we have ordered all officers to oppose such as should resist them in the execution of their duty with the exertion of the utmost force. We command our officers, civil and military, and all other subjects, to use their utmost endeavours to discover pikes, guns, swords, weapons, and ammunition of all kinds concealed. We charge all persons having such arms in their hands to deliver them at their peril. Believing that many of his Majesty's subjects may have joined these societies without knowing their nature, or from intimidation, and may be willing to return to their allegiance, we promise full pardon to all persons so seduced who, before the 24th of June, will surrender to any magistrate of the county where they reside, take the oath of allegiance, and give recognisances for their good behaviour.'

A copy of this proclamation was sent to every magistrate and to every officer in command of a detachment. Precise directions accompanied it to disarm the people everywhere, to send parties of troops to search where arms were supposed to be concealed, and to treat every person as a rebel who resisted them in the discharge of their duty.

The gauntlet was thus thrown down. The Government had given a clear intimation that they would

yield no further, and now was the time for the United Irishmen to show of what metal they were made. The French negotiation was hanging fire. The precious interval of the mutiny was passing away. On the appearance of the proclamation a secret meeting of Delegates, from all parts of Ireland, was held in Dublin to decide what they should do. The Ulster men were for an instant rising. The Militia they believed to be disaffected to a man. They asserted, with or without ground, that they had friends in the Castle garrison who would assist in a surprise. There were depôts of arms and ammunition at Athlone and Mullingar which they were confident of being able to secure. If they had Athlone in their hands, the country was expected to rise between that place and Drogheda. Communication with the North would thus be cut off, and Lake could be overpowered. Arthur O'Connor was for immediate action also, and undertook to raise twenty thousand men in the South.

At that time, and while the disarmament had been only commenced, they might doubtless have effected something considerable. But the Dublin Committee, magnificent on platform or in leading articles, were in action arrant cowards. They insisted that the French must be waited for. High words rose. The hard republican Northerners, when they went into a conspiracy, meant business by it, not blatant timidity. When the Dublin men refused to go with them, they thought at one time of attempting the Castle alone.

There were seventy or eighty of them who could depend on one another. They trusted that the mob would join when a beginning had been made; and only an accidental change of the guard <sup>1797</sup> made them relinquish their purpose after all. They returned to Belfast, meaning to rise alone against Lake, but they were embarrassed and alarmed by the frequent arrests of their leaders. Treachery of some kind was evidently at work. A coolness arose between them and the Southern Catholics. They distrusted their allies; they doubted whether, in company with cowards, they could make the revolution the glorious thing which they had anticipated. They began to think it was time to take care of themselves—some went abroad, others stayed at home and meddled no more in politics, and from that moment the interest of Ulster in the rebellion began to decline.<sup>1</sup>

Wolfe Tone, in France, bewailed bitterly his Dublin friends' poltroonery. Keogh he had long known to be a poor creature, but he confessed himself astonished that Emmett had not shown more energy. The labour of years was crumbling away. One after another his comrades joined him with the same pitiful story, that the United Lodges throughout the Northern counties were disheartened and dissolving. The people waited till the last day mentioned in the proclamation, and then, seeing their leaders passive and

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<sup>1</sup> 'See a most curious account of the Dublin meeting, and the consequences of it, given by one of the Ulster Delegates to Lord Downshire in London, October 8, 1797.' S.P.O.

no help reaching them from abroad, 'submitted almost entirely,' gave up their arms, and took the oath of allegiance.<sup>1</sup> Tone consoled himself with the hope that when the French landed the oath would be forgotten, or, as he expressed it, 'that their present submission would not prevent the people from doing what was right.' But the loss of Ulster was, in fact, the loss of the right arm of the insurrection. The Presbyterians fell away, and gradually re-united themselves to their own Orange kindred. The conspiracy declined rapidly into the form which rebellions in that country inevitably assume, and became a strictly nationalist movement of the Catholic Irish, with a few foolish enthusiasts of no religion at all in the Committee by which it was nominally ruled.

The supreme direction passed now to the Dublin executive. Wolfe Tone was not completely in their confidence. An attorney named Lewines, who had been bred as a Jesuit, was sent to Paris as their resident agent with the Directory. A memorial was drawn up, indicating the points of the coast where an invading force could most easily be landed, and where it would be most certain of receiving support from the people. Doctor MacNeven, the ablest member of the association that remained, undertook the delivery of it, and followed Lewines<sup>2</sup> to France.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wolfe Tone's Journal*, August 5, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> 'Doctor MacNeven is a physician, very eloquent and very

clever; a member of the Catholic Committee, and calculated by his talents to take a lead in the treason entrusted to him. He has been in

Difficulties had arisen with the French Government as to the scale on which assistance was to be rendered. The Directory, if it meddled with Ireland, preferred to invade with a force which would make France master of the country after the English had been expelled. The Irish Committee desired to limit their dangerous auxiliaries to numbers which would be insufficient to enable them to make Ireland a second Italy. Suspicions, which had arisen on both sides, were now dispelled. MacNeven's memoir was received, and favourably considered. The Irish agents pressed for immediate assistance. The Directory promised to use the very first opportunity, and undertook meanwhile to make no peace with England of which the independence of Ireland was not a condition.

Thus on all sides the situation was clearing. The memoir said that the Irish priests were no longer alarmed at French irreligion, and were now well-affected to the cause.<sup>1</sup> The English Cabinet ceased to worry Lord Camden with suggestions of a change of policy. Their hearts had failed them after

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close habits of intimacy with Lord Edward Fitzgerald. I did not know this person was so much employed as he appears to be. He must be strictly watched, both here and in England; and an exact description of his person, which is a very remarkable one, shall be transmitted.'—'Camden to Portland, August 30.' S.P.O.

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that although MacNeven himself carried the memoir to Paris, and no suspicion has been suggested of MacNeven's treachery, the original document, not a copy, but the memoir itself was in a few days in the hands of the English Cabinet, and was by them forwarded to Lord Camden.



Grattan's secession. The hatred of Carhampton had led them to think of superseding him by a more popular Commander-in-Chief. Lord Cornwallis had been spoken of, and Carhampton and Camden, who had no love for their ungrateful office, were but too willing to pass over to him the responsibility both of the command of the troops and of the Viceroyalty itself, if he would accept it.<sup>1</sup> Cornwallis's solid qualities were unequal to the understanding of the Irish problem. He believed, perhaps under the influence of his friend Lord Moira, in the common platitudes of the Liberal party. In a conversation with Pitt and Dundas he declared it impossible for him 'to engage in the business . . . unless means were taken immediately to separate the Catholics and Dissenters.' He considered that 'very great concessions, little, if at all, short of what was called Catholic Emancipation, were necessary, and ought not to be withheld.' When pressed to undertake the command he replied that, 'if Ireland was invaded, or was in immediate danger of invasion, he would go there;' but that otherwise he was convinced that no force that England could employ would reduce the country to obedience, and 'that he could not honestly undertake a task which he believed could not be accomplished.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Lord Cornwallis, May 23, 1797.'—*Cornwallis Letters*, vol. ii. p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> 'Portland to Camden, June 10. Most private.' S.P.O.

## SECTION V.

WOLFE TONE meanwhile, inspired by steady hate of England, and refusing to be dispirited by his disappointment at Bantry, had unweariedly kept <sup>1797</sup> the cause of his country before General Hoche, who had taken Ireland for his peculiar province. The spring passed without fresh efforts; but with the summer came Lewines and MacNeven, and on the 21st of June Hoche told Tone that a second expedition had been resolved upon, but on a scale so large that two months must pass before the preparations for it would be completed. The opportunity of the Mutiny of the Nore had been allowed to pass unused. It was now over, and the men had returned to their duties; but the impression prevailed in France that the fleet was still unfit for active duty. Both Tone and Lewines besought instant action. If a landing could be effected in Ireland at once, they undertook that the Irish seamen would again make themselves masters of the Channel squadron, and that 5,000 men at that moment would be worth more than 25,000 in the autumn or winter. Hoche listened; the Directory listened. There was a Dutch fleet prepared for sea in the Texel, and a Dutch army of 15,000 men eager to distinguish itself. General Dandaels offered to go as commander of the land forces. Admiral de Winter said his ships could be

ready in a fortnight. To the Dutch the Irish campaign was made over; and Tone, who was in despair at parting from Hoche, was consoled by hearing from him that French jealousy would be piqued, and that he would himself be despatched immediately after with a second expedition from Brest.

De Winter had not overstated his forwardness. In the first week in July the army was on board. Tone, who was to accompany the admiral, was delighted with the appearance of the ships—sixteen sail of the line and ten frigates, all in excellent fighting order, with seven-and-twenty transports. Here once more was hope. Admiral Duncan lay outside with the blockading squadron. Twelve and sometimes fourteen sail could be counted from the shore, but in Tone's eager eyes they were filled with his injured countrymen, whose hearts were beating time with his own. There was no fear of Duncan, either in him or in the Dutch commander, who was looking forward to an engagement outside the harbour with enthusiasm and confidence. The difficulty was to sail out and meet him. In Bantry Bay a gale from the east had divided the French fleet and prevented a landing. In the Texel a steady wind from the west confined the Dutch to their anchorage. Day followed day, week followed week, and still the west wind blew, while, warned by MacNeven's memoir, the Admiralty sent Duncan reinforcements, and the twelve ships increased to twenty.

Once more we observe the scene through Tone's impatient jottings.

'July 16.—A spy sent out. Returns last night with news that the English fleet is twenty-four sail of the line. I believe it is a lie. Duncan has fifteen or sixteen at most. We sail instantly that the wind will let us. July 17.—A wind foul as the devil. July 18.—Foul as possible this morning. Cannot be worse. Hell! hell! hell! July 19.—There never was and never will be such an expedition as ours, if it succeeds. It will change the destiny of Europe, open the sea to the commerce of the world, and subvert a tyranny of six hundred years. Gun exercise every day. They fire incomparably well. July 28.—Fair wind yesterday at last, but so late and feeble we could not weigh anchor. July 29.—Wind fair, but so light we cannot stir. The admiral counted to-day the English fleet at anchor. Twenty-five three-masters, fifteen or sixteen liners, the rest frigates. Wind excellent to-night. We are off to-morrow.'<sup>1</sup>

At daybreak the signal was flying to weigh. The sails were dropping from the yards, the rigging of sixty vessels all black with busy figures clinging to the ropes. If the wind held, they would be engaged before noon.

The perverse wind which had mocked their hopes edged to the south and thence to the south-west, with a gale and a thunderstorm.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wolfe Tone's Journal*, July, 1797.

‘There is a fate in this business,’ was the entry of the 2nd of August. ‘We have been twenty-five days on board when twenty-five hours are of moment. For five or six weeks the sea was open through the mutiny. We could have gone where we pleased. Nothing was ready, and the chance was lost. Had we been in Ireland at the moment of the insurrection at the Nore, we should, beyond a doubt, have had that fleet at least.’

‘August 8.—Wind foul. They talk now of the lateness of the season. England is a second time saved by the wind. I begin to grow desperate.’

The delay was exhausting the provisions. There were no longer stores to enable De Winter to risk a voyage round Scotland, with the chance of detention at sea. A council of war was held, at which two of the Belfast Committee, Lowry and Tennant, were present, and De Winter suggested sending off a small squadron and three thousand men. The Irish leaders said that before Lake had disarmed Ulster five hundred would have been sufficient. The conditions were now changed, but the organisation was not yet completely broken up. They thought that with three thousand men the venture might be made. Now, however, Dandaels made a difficulty. Dandaels refused to go with less than four thousand, and De Winter said he could not provide for so many. Finally, the Dutch Government decided that the original design must be adhered to. The troops must be landed for the present, the transports re-victualled, and De Winter

meanwhile must go out when an opportunity offered and destroy Duncan.

Readers of English naval history know what followed. On the 11th of October De Winter sailed out of the Texel, not to destroy Duncan, but, after a desperate engagement, to be utterly ruined by him. This time the Irish gentry had no reason to complain that the English fleet neglected their defence, and the brief absurd dream that Catholic Ireland was to find a champion in Calvinist Holland was ended at Camperdown.

A second blow to Tone's hopes almost more severe was the death of General Hoche by rapid consumption. In Hoche he lost the only Frenchman in whom he had been able to kindle a genuine interest in his country. The direction of the foreign military policy of France passed to Napoleon, and in Napoleon he found cold civility and nothing more. Ireland was not to be thrown over so long as chronic disturbance served to divert and embarrass England, but to loud talk of a re-established Irish nationality Napoleon closed his ears. He refused to believe that the native Irish were more than two millions, and he wounded patriot vanity by the contempt with which he spoke of them.

The invasion was thus again indefinitely postponed, and the number of Irish refugees in Paris became considerable. Having brought Ireland to the edge of a conflagration, they preferred to remain out of danger on the Continent till the French were

ready to place them at the head of their admiring countrymen. Some were traitors in Pitt's pay. The rest chilled still further the cooling interest of France in their cause by their petty jealousies and childish vanity. Each insisted that he and his own knot of friends were the true representatives of Irish opinion. Among others there appeared again on the scene Napper Tandy, from America, giving out that he was some great one. Wolfe Tone and Lewines were civilians; Napper, who had commanded the Dublin Volunteer Artillery, presented himself as an experienced officer. He had money. His sons still carried on business in Dublin. He declared that when he set foot in Ireland it would be the re-appearance of Achilles; thirty thousand soldiers would spring to his side.

These foolish beings were the scum and froth which the rebellion was working off and throwing from it. The serious part remained at home. Lord Camden had hoped that the break-up in Ulster might dissolve the conspiracy. He found to his sorrow that the Committees in Dublin and elsewhere were at work as vigorously as ever. He might arrest individuals, but the system baffled him.<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Leinster had seceded from the Parliament with Grattan and Ponsonby. The attitude of the Opposition was interpreted by the people as a constitutional sanction to rebellion and an open encouragement to them to transfer

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, June 17.' S.P.O.

their allegiance to France.<sup>1</sup> The preparations in the Texel were on everybody's lips, and kept alive the excitement and irritation through the summer and into the autumn. At the end of September the Dutch were still eagerly looked for ;<sup>2</sup> and confident in their new allies, and forgetful or careless now that Dutch theology was not precisely their own, the Catholics refused any terms of reconciliation with the Government short of the establishment of their religion.<sup>3</sup>

Undisturbed by clamour, and with a courage deserving higher commendation than the Cabinet dared to bestow upon it, Lord Camden, with the invasion hanging over him, stood to his work of disarming Ulster. It was Ulster which he chiefly dreaded. If

<sup>1</sup> 'The line of conduct pursued by the Opposition has tended more to alienate the people of this country, and dispose them to connect themselves with France, than any other circumstance.'—'Pelham to Portland, September 29.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> On the 26th Mr. Cooke sent a note to Mr. Greville, which he said he had received from a person 'high in confidence among the United Irishmen, who had never deceived him.' The note was this:—

'From undoubted authority I assure you that an invasion is now considered inevitable. Assurances are received from France that the Government is determined, and that Ireland shall have complete independence. Tandy, Tone, and

Lewines are the chief agents. The time fixed is the first fair wind after the equinoctial gales are over. Tandy will have a commission, and Tone comes as secretary to the commander of the land forces. All mouths are at work whispering the intelligence through the country. In a few days it will be known through every village in the kingdom.'—*MSS.* S.P.O. September 26.

<sup>3</sup> 'Nothing short of the establishment of the Catholic religion will satisfy those of that persuasion; and as the property of the country is in the hands of Protestants, such an event can never take place without civil war.'—'Pelham to Portland, September 29.' S.P.O.



Ulster could be either pacified or handcuffed; he believed himself capable of encountering the disaffection of the Southern Provinces. Severe measures were used, and the severity may at times have been excessive. Camden did not deny that he meant 'to strike terror.' 'Terrorism had been the policy of the rebels.' 'They had brought the North of Ireland into such a state that a tenant did not dare acknowledge his landlord, and the assassinations of informers were without number.' Such a system could be confronted only by proof that the Government had the harder hand. The 'Northern Star,' the patriot organ at Belfast, had distinguished itself by inviting the militia to perjury. The infected Monaghan regiment, four privates out of which had been shot, was quartered there, and the loyal comrades of the men who had been executed, 'knowing that the "Star" had been the means of seduction,' attacked the office, destroyed the press, and wrecked the printer's house. Cottages, and even villages, had been burnt, where large quantities of arms had been found concealed. Orders had been given, and were strictly enforced, that lights should be extinguished at an early hour of the night; and persons found abroad after dark were made to give a sharp account of themselves. A shot was fired at the house of a tenant of Lord Moira, by which a woman was frightened, though not hurt. Incendiarism and murder, when committed by the rebels, were the venial effervescence of a too zealous patriotism. Severity, inflicted in the interest of order, was the only form

of outrage which in the opinion of Irish patriots and their friends in England was held to merit reprobation. The Liberal newspapers in both islands were filled with accounts of the barbarity of General Lake's soldiers. The outcries rose to a scream when the Government seized a member of the Executive Northern Committee whom they had long known to be one of the worst and most dangerous of them, and against whom, by the help of an informer, they had at last obtained legal evidence. William Orr was tried at Carrickfergus, in October, for high treason. The most passionate efforts were made to save him, but the <sup>1797</sup> proofs were too clear. He was convicted and duly hanged. His body was carried off, his veins were opened, and calf's blood was injected, in the hope of restoring the circulation. When all failed he had a public funeral, which was attended by thousands. His cap was cut in shreds, distributed in relics, and worn in rings and bracelets by the patriotic daughters of Ireland. 'Remember Orr!' was thenceforth added to the secret by-words of vengeance which were taking possession of the Irish ear and driving the people to madness.

General Lake's measures were felt to be successful, and the rage was proportionately extravagant. There now appeared at intervals a paper called the 'Union Star.' It was printed on one side of a sheet, so that it could be pasted upon the walls. The avowed object was 'to denounce by name the partners and creatures of Pitt and his sanguinary journeyman, Luttrell,' and offer them one by one to what was called

'public justice.' A Government proclamation having spoken of the 'Star' with the indignation which it deserved, the 'Star' replied with the following passage :—

'We have seen a paper with the name of Camden prefixed attempting to hurt the "Union Star" by naming it a vehicle for inviting assassination. The "Union Star" in the opinion of honest Irishmen will not be less valuable. We are not advocates for assassination, but we know on the authority of history that assassination preserved the liberties and rescued many of the ancient republics from aspiring villains. . . . We certainly do not advise, but we do not decry assassination, as we conceive it is the only mode at present within the reach of Irishmen to bring to justice the royal agents who are constantly exercising rapes, murders, and burnings through our devoted country. We appeal to thy noble and venerated name, oh ! Brutus. Prince of patriotic assassins, thy noble and virtuous spirit should pervade our land.'<sup>1</sup>

The 'Star' preached tyrannicide. The Dublin Committee employed agents like the blacksmith Dunn to practise it. Simultaneously the patriots of higher grade had abandoned the field in the Irish Parliament only to transfer their efforts to the sister country, where they could count better on popular ignorance, and where they knew that they could appeal with effect to the national abhorrence of oppression. The

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Secret Committee of the Commons. Appendix, 27.

Duke of Leinster drew up a formal indictment against the proceedings of General Lake. The London press took it up, and the misgovernment of Camden and Fitzgibbon<sup>1</sup> was represented as the only cause of the disquiet of Ireland. Lord Moira threatened a second attack in the House of Lords, and the Prime Minister wrote to Pelham and Camden for an explanation of particular acts of cruelty with which Lake was popularly charged. Pitt himself did not affect to believe them, but to special accusations he desired to be able to give a special reply.

The answer was painfully easy. The policeman who has stunned a man with his staff may appear a gratuitous savage till it has been shown that the man whom he struck was beating his wife to death. Camden had but to send authentic proof of the conduct and temper of the people with whom he had to deal.

The Irish complaint reduced to plain language was simply this:—You English, they said in effect, have conquered this island, and we wish to have it for ourselves. We will not fight for it, but we require you to let us alter our Constitution so that we shall be free in spite of you. If you refuse, we will conspire with your enemies, we will murder your friends, we will make it impossible for you to govern us; your magistrates, your constables, your witnesses, shall die if they put your laws in force against us; and if in

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<sup>1</sup> Now Earl of Clare.

return you dare to punish us by shorter methods, we will proclaim to the world that what you call our crimes are the fruits of your own tyranny.

For eighteen years the air had been filled with the windy declamations of Grattan, and the fierce and sullen spirit which lies at the bottom of the Irish nature like the sleeping fire of a volcano was now awakening in its dreadful reality.

Camden and Pelham wrote at length in painful detail.<sup>1</sup> Each morning's post brought with it some fresh tale of horror. Before the Viceroy had closed his letter, news came from the South that one magistrate had been murdered, another wounded; a constable had been found dead, with his limbs hacked in pieces, and a label left in his hand threatening the same treatment to any one who should bury him. At Two Mile Bridge, near Youghal, a farmer, his wife, his servant, his pigs, his dogs, even his poultry, had all been slaughtered. The bowels of the man had been torn out, and on him too a label was lying, that such was the reward of an informer.

Were these things to go on? were the tears of the friends of liberty to flow in streams for the sullen scoundrel who was flogged till he confessed to the store of secret arms which he had laid up for deeds of devilry? and was there to be no pity for the victims who were nightly sacrificed because they

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pelham to Pitt, November | Portland, November 3. Private  
2; Lord Camden to the Duke of | and secret. S.P.O.

had dared to exert themselves for his detection and punishment? <sup>1</sup>

To drive the peasantry to madness, forged Orange

<sup>1</sup> Let the reader who desires to understand Lord Camden's position study the following letter from Mr. Rolleston, of Green Park, Youghal, dated October 26, 1797. Mr. Rolleston had already reported the mutilation of some horses and cows, almost within view of his windows:—

'On the night of the 23rd,' he wrote again, 'a day remarkable in history,<sup>1</sup> a murder of the most atrocious kind was committed on three persons, at a village named Two Mile Bridge . . . The surgeons and physicians who went to view the bodies came away sickened. The deceased were a man, his wife, and a servant-maid. The head was a respectable, wealthy farmer, who first provoked the miscreants by not selling his milk at their reduced prices. For that they houghed his cows. He gave information to Mr. Swayne, a magistrate here, and two men were taken up and sent to Waterford Gaol. The night but one following, this murder was committed, and the people of the village pretend to say they heard nothing of it, so determined are they on secrecy. The terror system is universal. We hear of fresh murders every day. Mr. Power had a tenant, whose bowels were torn out. . . The clerk of Temple

Michael parish has been murdered. . . Forty pounds are publicly offered for Mr. Swayne's head; but, in fact, all yeomen are proscribed. This day I got a hint not to join in out parties; that my father, my uncle, and myself were loved and respected, and that I should not wantonly deprive my children of their father. I answered, I preferred an honourable death to a dishonourable life. I would always endeavour to bring a murderer to justice, and defend my property. We were ready to hear any real grievances, but could not allow our properties to be torn from us. . . We have little composed sleep. I cannot place entire confidence in any servants I have; they are either under the influence of terror, or their minds are vitiated. . . A little time will show what our tenants mean to do. Tithes are not their real object—they have a much wider view. They want fairly to overturn us. If my house is attacked, we shall all go together, for the bloody ruffians did not leave a dog or a cat alive in the last massacre. I am well assured the Defenders' oath goes to a general massacre of all Protestants.'—'Extracts of a letter from Mr. Rolleston, October 26, 1797.' S.P.O.

<sup>1</sup> The anniversary of the outbreak in 1641.

oaths were hung on the doors of the chapels, threatening Catholics with extermination. When the battle of Camperdown had destroyed their hopes of invasion, they were told that the Irish seamen in the fleet had won the day; that at the 'moment when the blood and brains of generous Papists had adorned the last victory of the wooden walls of England, but not of Ireland, the bloody dastardly hand of tyranny was pointing the dagger at their hearts.' They were reminded 'that while the honest United Irishmen were grasped with the iron hand of ferocity and cruelty, the infamous Orangemen, who thirsted after blood and murder, were caressed and encouraged by the heavenly Government.' They were informed—and the sham oath was referred to as a proof—'that the Orangemen had sworn to be true to the King and Government, and to destroy the Catholics of Ireland.' They were invited to believe that an Orangeman had invented a toast, 'That the skins of the Papists should be drum-heads for the Yeomanry,' and that the framer of that toast had been appointed secretary at the Castle.<sup>1</sup> A list was posted against a chapel door at Nenagh of certain Protestants in the neighbourhood, whom the people were desired by no means to injure, but were advised to remember their names.<sup>2</sup>

In the condition of the public mind these stories

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<sup>1</sup> 'Letter posted on the door of the Catholic chapel at Nenagh, November 1.—Enclosed by Camden, to the Duke of Portland.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

were accepted as truth, reported in the papers, and gained credit even in England. Pelham thought at one time of going over and dragging before the English Parliament the situation in which the Castle was placed. He was deterred by the fear of exasperating further the bitterness between the two countries.<sup>1</sup> Camden said that only dreary familiarity with details of outrage and cruelty prevented every one of his despatches from being filled with accounts 'of murders of magistrates, assassinations of informers and yeomen, and conspiracies against persons of rank.'<sup>2</sup>

Pelham, perhaps, would have been wiser if he had been less cautious. Lord Moira took advantage of the silence of the Irish Government in the midst of the clamour with which it was assailed to come forward a second time as the advocate of the miscreants, whom he represented as victims of Lord Camden's barbarity. He had been in Ireland in the autumn. If he visited his own estates he must have seen that they were the arsenal of the Northern rebels. As the advocate of Irish ideas he conceived, perhaps, that assassins could be best disarmed by caresses.

'He had seen in Ireland,' Lord Moira said in the English House of Lords, on the 22nd of November, 'the most disgusting tyranny that any nation ever groaned under, a tyranny creating uni-<sup>1797</sup>versal discontent and hatred of the English name.'

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pelham to Pitt, November 2.'  
S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Camden to Portland, Novem-  
ber 15.' S.P.O.



The long nights were the murderers' opportunity; but to Lord Moira it appeared a monstrous thing that General Lake should have ordered the people to stay at home after dark, or that where lights were seen in cabin windows the patrol should call and order the extinction of them. He appealed to British sentiment, and complained of the revival of the curfew, the badge of ancient slavery. He knew the superstitious horror felt by England for the name of the Inquisition. The Inquisition, he told the Lords, and through the Lords the English world, was in force in Ireland in all its horrors. Persons against whom no crime had been proved were torn from their families, flogged, racked, picketed, and threatened with the gallows. He did not tell the Lords that in no instance were severities resorted to except where the guilt of the parties was accurately known, or that by these means tens of thousands of pikes and muskets had been discovered. General Lake had required the people to surrender their arms. Lord Moira ignored the Insurrection Act, and insisted that the possession of arms was a constitutional right. The people, he said, felt a just indignation when their arms were taken from them, and to punish them for natural resistance was cruel and intolerable. Great Britain was justly jealous of the liberty of the press. Lord Moira forgot to say that the press of Ireland was inviting soldiers to break their military oaths, and was preaching the virtues of tyrannicide. He denounced the brutal soldiery which burst into offices of the journals that

exposed their tyranny, and destroyed the printing presses, to prevent the truth from being published. 'If the press was interfered with,' he said, 'the last spark of freedom was extinguished.' If Lord Camden's Government continued, 'Ireland would not remain five years longer connected with England.'

It was easy for Lord Grenville, it was easy for Lord Loughborough, to dispose at the moment of Lord Moira's fable. They had but to relate a few stories out of the daily returns of atrocities committed by his interesting clients; they had but to read a few specimens of the publications of the virtuous and injured Irish press for the House of Lords to dismiss with contempt the extravagant caricature which had been presented to them. Lord Moira was to receive in another place the full measure of chastisement which his disloyalty or his folly had provoked. By what irony of fate have the speeches of Lord Moira been allowed to govern the opinions of later generations of Englishmen?

## SECTION VI.

WHEN patriotism is genuine it confers on the most misguided enthusiast a certain nobility of temperament. It may blind his conscience. It may tempt him to look without dismay, and even with applause, on actions which a cooler judgment must for ever reprobate as crimes; but in the enthusiast himself it creates a disregard of self, a fulness of devotion, a readiness to forego private advantage, to sacrifice fortune, life, even reputation itself, to the cause which he has embraced.

The character of political combinations may be fairly tested by the quality of the men concerned in them, and by the disposition which they are able to inspire. The conspiracy of the United Irishmen produced, perhaps, a larger number of deliberate villains than have ever been found arrayed in a movement which has called itself national. From the first moment of its institution the most trusted members of the society were traitors to it. As the design proceeded, and information became more valuable, men deepest in the secret, and seemingly most ardent, were selling their knowledge to the Castle, stipulating only for concealment from the execration and revenge of their confederates. An instance has now to be related, remarkable for the ingenious perfidy with which it was attended, for the mystery which still attaches

to the principal performer, and for his connection with the fortunes and fate of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

Lord Edward's movements had for some time been observed with anxiety, as much from general uneasiness as from regret that a brother of the Duke of Leinster should be connecting himself with conspiracy and treason. His proceedings in Paris in '92 had cost him his commission in the army. In the Irish Parliament he had been undistinguished by talent, but conspicuous for the violence of his language. His meeting with Hoche on the Swiss frontier was a secret known only to a very few persons; Hoche himself had not revealed it even to Tone; but Lord Edward was known to be intimate with MacNeven. He had been watched in London, and had been traced to the lodgings of a suspected agent of the French Directory;<sup>1</sup> and among other papers which had been forwarded by spies to the Government there was one in French, containing an allusion to some female friend of Lady Edward, through whom a correspondence was maintained between Ireland and Paris. Lady Edward's house at Hamburg was notoriously the resort of Irish refugees. Lord Edward himself was frequently there, and the Government suspected, though they were unable to prove, that he was seriously committed with the United Irishmen. One night early in October 1797 a person came to the house of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, August 30, 1797.' S.P.O.

Lord Downshire, in London, and desired to see him immediately. Lord Downshire went into the hall, and found a man muffled in a cloak, with a hat slouched over his face, who requested a private interview. Downshire took him into his library, and when he threw off his disguise recognised in his visitor the son of a gentleman of good fortune in the North of Ireland, with whom he was slightly acquainted. Lord Downshire's 'friend' (the title under which he was always subsequently described) had been a member of the Ulster Revolutionary Committee. From his acquaintance with the details of what had taken place, it may be inferred that he had accompanied the Northern Delegation to Dublin, and had been present at the discussion of the propriety of an immediate insurrection. The cowardice or prudence of the Dublin faction had disgusted him. He considered now that the conspiracy was likely to fail, or that, if it succeeded, it would take a form which he disapproved; and he had come over, as he said, to sell his services and his information to Pitt. In telling his story to Lord Downshire he painted his own conduct in colours least discreditable to himself. Like many of his friends, he had at first, he said, wished only for a reform in Parliament and a change in the Constitution. He had since taken many desperate steps and connected himself with desperate men. 'He had discovered that the object of the Papists was the ruin and destruction of the country, and the establishment of a tyranny worse than that which was complained of by

the reformers; that proscriptions, seizures of property, murders, and assassinations were the certain consequences to be apprehended from their machinations; that he had determined to separate himself from the conspiracy. He was in England to make every discovery in his power, and if Lord Downshire had not been in London he had meant to address himself to Portland or Pitt. He stipulated only, as usual, 'that he should never be called on to appear in a court of justice to prosecute any one who might be taken up in consequence of his discoveries.'

Lord Downshire agreed to his conditions; but, as it was then late, desired him to return and complete his story in the morning. He said that his life was in danger even in London. He could not venture a second time to Lord Downshire, or run the risk of being observed by his servants. Downshire appointed the empty residence of a friend in the neighbourhood. Thither he went the next day in a hackney-coach. The door was left unlocked, and he entered unseen by any one. Lord Downshire then took down from his lips a list of the principal members of the Executive Committee, by whom the whole movement was at that time directed.<sup>1</sup> He next related at considerable length

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<sup>1</sup> 'Jackson and his son; Oliver Bond; John Chambers, a bookseller; James Dixon, a tanner; Casey, a red-faced Dublin priest; Thomas Addys Emmett; Doctor MacNeven, a physician, who had great weight with the Papists; Braughall; John Keogh; and R. McCormick, who belonged to the Committee, though they did not attend; Samuel Turner; Lord Edward Fitzgerald; Arthur O'Connor; Alexander Stewart; two Orrs, one an attorney, and a dangerous per-

the proceedings of the United Irishmen during the two past years, the division of opinion, the narrow chance by which a rising had been escaped in Dublin in the spring, and his own subsequent adventures. He had fled with others from Belfast in the general dispersion of the leaders. Lady Edward Fitzgerald had given him shelter at Hamburg, and had sent him on to Paris with a letter to her brother-in-law, General Valence. By General Valence he had been introduced to Hoche and De la Croix. He had seen Talleyrand, and had talked at length with him on the condition of Ireland. He had been naturally intimate with the other Irish refugees. Napper Tandy was considered mad, strolling about the streets in uniform, and calling himself a major. Hamilton Rowan had been pressed to return, but preferred safety in America, and professed himself sick of politics. After this, 'the person,' as Lord Downshire called his visitor, keeping even the Cabinet in ignorance of his name, came to the immediate object of his visit to England. He had discovered that all important negotiations between the Revolutionary Committee in Dublin and their Paris agents passed through Lady Edward's hands. The Paris letters were transmitted first to her

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son, the other of Derry, described as a clever, sensible, strong-minded man; Barclay Teeling; Tennant, of Belfast; Agnew, of Larne; Lawless (Lord Cloncurry's eldest son); Hamilton, of Domenick Street; Inishry,	a priest, a canting, designing, dangerous man, who swore in Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Lawless.— 'List and description given to Lord Downshire, October 9, 1797' S.P.O.
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at Hamburg. By her they were forwarded to Lady Lucy Fitzgerald in London. From London, Lady Lucy was able to send them on unsuspected. Being himself implicitly trusted both by Lady Edward and by Lady Lucy, he believed he could give the Government information which would enable them to detect and examine these letters in their transit through the post.

Pitt was out of town. He returned, however, in a few days. Downshire immediately saw him, and Pitt consented that 'the person's' services should be accepted. There was some little delay. 'The person' took alarm, disappeared, and they supposed that they had lost him. Three weeks later, however, he wrote to Downshire from Hamburg, saying that he had returned to his old quarters, for fear he might be falling into a trap. It was fortunate, he added, that he had done so, for a letter was on the point of going over from Barclay Teeling to Arthur O'Connor, and he gave Downshire directions which would enable him to intercept, read, and send it on.

Such an evidence of 'the person's' power and will to be useful made Pitt extremely anxious to secure his permanent help. An arrangement was concluded. He continued at Hamburg as Lady Edward's guest and most trusted friend, saw every one who came to her house, kept watch over her letter-bag, was admitted to close and secret conversations upon the prospect of French interference in Ireland with Rheinart, the Minister of the Directory there, and he regularly kept



Lord Downshire informed of everything which would enable Pitt to watch the conspiracy.

One of his letters, dated November 19, is preserved:—

‘A. Lowry writes from Paris, October 11, in great despondency on account of Hoche’s death, and says that all hopes of invading Ireland were given over. I then saw Rheinart, the French Minister, who begged me to stay here, as the only mode in which I could serve my country and the Republic. I instantly acquiesced, and told him I had arranged matters with Lord Edward Fitzgerald in London for that purpose. I showed him Lowry’s letter. He said that things were changed. Bonaparte would not listen to the idea of peace, and had some plan, which I do not know.

‘I told him the spirit of republicanism was losing ground in Ireland, for the Catholics and Protestants could not be brought to unite. I mentioned then what Fitzgerald told me in London, viz. that after I left Ireland they had thought of bringing matters to a crisis without the French. Arthur O’Connor was to have had a command in the North, he himself in Leinster, Robert Simms at Belfast; that the Catholics got jealous of this, and Richard McCormick, of Dublin, went among the societies of United men and denounced the three as traitors to the cause and dangerous on account of their ambition.

‘All letters to or from Lady Lucy Fitzgerald ought

to be inspected. She, Mrs. Matthieson,<sup>1</sup> of this place, and Pamela carry on a correspondence. Lewines, Teeling, Tennant, Lowry, Orr, and Colonel Tandy are at Paris. Tone expects to stay the winter there, which does not look like invasion. Oliver Bond is treasurer. He pays Lewines and MacNeven in London.

‘Now for myself. In order to carry into effect the scheme which you and Mr. Pitt had planned, it was requisite for me to see my countrymen. I called on Maitland, where I found A. J. Stuart of Acton, both of them heartily sick of politics. Edward Fitzgerald had been inquiring of them for me. I went to Harley Street, where Fitz told me of the conduct of the Catholics to him and his friends. He said he would prevail on O’Connor or some such to go to Paris. If not, he would go himself in order to have Lewines removed. Mrs. Matthieson has just heard from Lady Lucy that O’Connor is to come. I supped last night with Valence, who mentioned his having introduced Lord Edward and O’Connor to the Minister here in the summer, before the French attempted to invade Ireland. They both went to Switzerland, whence O’Connor passed into France, had an interview with Hoche, and everything was planned.

‘I feared lest Government might not choose to ratify our contract; and being in their power would give me my choice either to come forward as an

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<sup>1</sup> A relative of Lady Edward.

evidence, or suffer martyrdom myself. Having no taste for an exit of this sort, I set out and arrived here safe, and now beg you'll let me know if anything was wrong in my statements, or if I have given offence. If you approve my present mode of life and encourage me so to do, with all deference I think Mr. Pitt may let me have a cool five hundred, which shall last me for six months to come. To get the information here has cost me three times the sum; and to keep up the acquaintance and connections I have here, so as to get information, I cannot live on less.' <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Letter of November 19, 1797, from Hamburg, to Lord Downshire.'—*Irish MSS.* S.P.O.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE EVE OF '98.

#### SECTION I.

No statesmen were ever more painfully situated in the presence of conspiracy than those who were responsible for the safety of Ireland on the eve <sup>1797</sup> of the rebellion of 1798. The country was preparing for an insurrection which, by the confession of the best-informed of its promoters, was likely if successful to be attended by scenes like those which had disgraced the rising of Sir Phelim O'Neil. The temper of the people was the same, the object was the same. The Government was exactly informed of all that was going forward. The names of the leaders, their purposes, their methods of proceeding, were known. The first droppings of the coming storm were apparent daily in the paralysis of the civil authority and an organised system of terror. But the witnesses who in private were ready to betray their comrades or their cause were unavailable for purposes of public order and justice. The villager who with his own eyes had seen a family

massacred, and in private, under an oath of secrecy, told his story with trembling lips, found his memory fail him when produced in court to repeat his evidence in public. The magistrate who might have dared the immediate menaces of the secret tribunals, remembered that, though the present danger might be overcome, his family and himself must remain in the midst of the people whose undying hatred he might incur by energetic exertion. He had learnt by centuries of experience that those who in times of trouble were most loyal to the British crown could count on no support when coercion was succeeded by the fatal desire to conciliate. If he rose superior to his distrust, and grappled successfully with the rebellious agencies, he was proscribed by name in the patriotic press. Proscription was followed by death, and the security with which the sentence was inflicted, from the determination of the people to shield the executioners from punishment, operated as a frightful and too effective warning that, if he valued his own or his children's lives, he must fold his hands and close his eyes.

The machinery of law was out of joint. Two alternatives lay before the authorities at the Castle, each equally dangerous. Either they, too, must sit by till the mine exploded, to be reproached, like the Lords Justices in 1641, for having permitted a rebellion which they might have prevented, as an excuse for further oppression, or they must expose themselves to the moral indignation of the friends of liberty and humanity in both countries by acts of severity of which

they would be unable to avow the reasons, and be accused, when rebellion came, of having provoked it by tyranny.

Those who look back from the secure position of later times have forgotten to allow for a feeling which was never absent, night or day, from the minds of the conspirators, from the minds of the Executive at the Castle, from the minds of the gentry and clergy of Ireland, whose lives and fortunes were at stake. They have forgotten the real probability that the rebellion might succeed. It had the open support of the strongest military power in the world. The Bantry Bay expedition had proved how easily a French power might be landed. The sailing of the Texel fleet, at a time when Duncan was too weak to stop it, had been prevented only by the weather. If the experiment was not renewed, Bonaparte's victories had already inclined, and might at any time compel, England to come to terms with him, and the Directory had publicly promised that the independence of Ireland was to be a condition of peace.

Already the chances of the game were affecting families of consequence, who were trimming their sails in expectation of that contingency. <sup>1797</sup>

The Duke of Leinster was doing his utmost within the Constitution to bring the Government into public hatred. Lord Edward was not the only member of his house who was engaged in actual treason. The heir of Lord Cloncurry also was a sworn member of the Revolutionary Committee, and was traced on a mission

to England to meet a French emissary there.<sup>1</sup> He was accompanied, unknown to himself, by an officer whose business was to watch his motions and report him to the Home Office. Other information reached Camden, the nature of which, for the sake of the parties concerned, was never trusted to paper; but so important was it, that Pelham himself hurried to London to communicate personally with the astonished Cabinet.<sup>2</sup> Inflamed alternately with hope and rage, the newspapers became daily more daring. Arthur O'Connor, after spending a few months in the Castle, had been released on bail, Thomas Addys Emmett and Lord Edward Fitzgerald being his securities. 'The person who had come to Lord Downshire had revealed the secret of the visit to Switzerland; but, without betraying his authority, Camden could not again order O'Connor's arrest. He immediately instituted a publication named 'The Press,' which left far behind the comparatively tame ferocities of the 'Union Star.'

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Lawless, Lord Cloncurry's eldest son, is going to England this night, charged with an answer to a message lately received from France. I have sent Captain d'Auvergne in the packet with Mr. Lawless, with directions to find out where he means to go in London, and to give you immediate information.' — 'Pelham to John King, Esq., Nov. 7, 1797.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'I have had the pleasure of passing the whole morning with

Mr. Pelham, from whom I have learnt some circumstances which have astonished and grieved me beyond the utmost extent of my information.'—'Portland to Camden, December 16.' Lord Camden answers: 'I do not wonder at the surprise and indignation which your Grace expresses at some of the information which Mr. Pelham has given you, and which I thought it better should be so communicated than by letter.'

A letter appeared in its columns, addressed to Carhampton, on the failure of the attempt to assassinate him, signed 'Satanides,' and written probably by O'Connor himself. Carhampton was informed that he had escaped Dunn to be reserved for a more public doom. 'It was to be lamented,' the writer said to him, 'that you should perish by the stroke of private justice, and defraud the executioner of his right and the public of its example. Were you at this moment surrounded by the justly enraged populace, were their arms raised to inflict the desired doom, I would throw myself among their poinards. I would say, Suffer him to pollute the air a little longer. The day comes when justice shall prevail, when Ireland shall raise her head from the dust and perform a solemn sacrifice to the Constitution. On that awful day of rejoicing to the good, and terror to the wicked, a few victims may be required, and this wretch may be included in the number and meet the doom of a traitor.'

These words were perhaps penned when the French were immediately looked for. At times the mood varied. Public justice seemed far off, and the mind of Satanides reverted to Harmodius and Aristogiton.

'You, my fellow-students,' he said in another letter addressed to the patriots of Trinity College, 'you have explored the page of history where the insect courtier is forgotten, the despot is blasted in infamy, and the glorious tyrannicide is immortalised. Can you remember one instance of a people naturally brave, and wanting but the will to be illustrious, succumbing to the



domination of their own minions, and passively agonizing under the extremities of oppression? No! Ireland is singular in suffering and in cowardice. She could crush her tormentors, and yet they embowel her. She could be free, yet she is a slave.<sup>1</sup>

‘The unheard-of boldness of these publications,’ wrote Camden, ‘has been produced by the very decided offer of assistance from France. The intelligence with which we are furnished would, if certain persons could be brought forward, be sufficient to bring the conspiracy to light, defeat its ill consequences, and make a salutary impression on the minds of the people.’<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately ‘certain persons’ declined to be brought forward. Pelham, when in London, made large offers to Lord Downshire’s friend, but without effect. Evidence came in through the Foreign Office, but again ‘of a nature which could not be produced.’<sup>3</sup> Camden has been blamed as well for inaction as for exertion. His most earnest desire was to meet Parliament with a clear statement of all that he knew, to arrest the leaders, and bring them at once to trial. He had proof of the correspondence with France. He had lists of the Assassination Committee and the Committee of Revolution. He knew that in the main they consisted of the same persons; and that by their public conviction the mind of England would be set at rest.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Extracts from “The Press.”’  
—‘Report of the Secret Com-  
mittee, 1798. Ireland. Appendix,  
27.’

<sup>2</sup> ‘Camden to Portland, Decem-  
ber 2, December 7.’ S.P.O.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Camden to Portland, January  
8, 1798.’

The Opposition would be silenced, and the conspiracy, deprived of the sympathy by which it was encouraged, might be even yet extinguished before it assumed a fatal form. But the witnesses, indispensable to success, were not to be moved; and 'those persons who best know the country,' Lord Camden sadly said, 'agree with Mr. Pelham and myself (and I understand it to be the opinion of H.M.'s Ministers), that unless those who are at the head could be prosecuted with success no advantage would accrue by apprehending them.'<sup>1</sup>

When the time came for Parliament to open, therefore, the Speech from the Throne contained no more than a general statement that the country <sup>1798</sup> was dangerously disturbed, that the Government was determined to put a stop to treason and murder, and that the King relied upon the loyalty of the Irish gentry. In the House of Commons the field was abandoned to the Government. The remarkable feature of the beginning of the session was the appearance of Lord Moira, to repeat in his place as a Peer of Ireland the indictment which he had brought against Lord Camden's administration at Westminster.

It was audacious, for a crisis was evidently near. The day before Lord Moira spoke, the news had come in of the murder, under the most horrible circumstances, of two of the most active magistrates in Cork, Colonel St. George and Mr. Uniacke. But he had been taunted apparently with having delivered his attack

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, January 22, 1798.'

where it could be imperfectly met, and the vain and feeble enthusiasm of his character was impregnable to evidence.

He rose, he said, to reassert the charges which he had alleged in the Parliament of Great Britain against the treatment of Ulster by General Lake. Houses had been burnt, innocent individuals had been seized, imprisoned, flogged, and picketed. He did not blame the troops. He blamed the Government for having set them upon a duty so barbarous and so detestable—for having called in the strength of England to coerce and tyrannise over Ireland. If the Lords and Commons of Ireland assisted in depriving their country of its liberties, he warned them that they would themselves soon feel in shame the weight of the chain; they would soon, he said, dropping into weak sentimentalism, 'hear the plaintive genius of Ireland reproaching them for their cruelty.' The people were said to be irreconcilable. From his own experience he insisted that they were misunderstood and maligned. He had held a meeting in his own neighbourhood. He had described the confusion and misery which were created by democratic Republics. He had expounded the blessings of Constitutional Monarchy, and had expatiated on the virtue and benevolence of the Sovereign who filled the throne. 'When he spoke of the generous magnanimity of him who was the future hope of the realm, and of the regard with which he returned the affection manifested to him by Ireland on a melancholy occasion, there was not an eye which did not beam with the honest pride

of meriting by heartfelt self-devotion the favourable opinion of such a prince.<sup>1</sup>

'Appeal,' he exclaimed, 'to the hearts of the people; while you appeal to their fears you will never succeed. You must grant Catholic Emancipation. I give the opinion with the more confidence after the zeal and ardour manifested by the Catholics of the South when a French fleet was in one of your ports. You must grant Parliamentary Reform. The greatest evil to be feared from it sinks to nothing compared to the mischief which is raging at present. The expression of a conciliatory desire on your part would suspend immediately the agitation of the public mind.'<sup>2</sup>

It was not easy for the members of Council, to whom the state of Ireland was better known than to Lord Moira, if he really believed his words, to sit patient under his flatulent declamation. At that moment the Council were weighing intelligence from the friend at Hamburg, so serious that they had all but resolved on an immediate arrest of the entire Revolutionary Committee. The English Cabinet was still for delay, hoping for evidence which would ensure their conviction upon trial. The Irish advisers of the Crown,

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This was too much for the stomach of Wolfe Tone, who said Moira ought to have known better than to pretend that Ireland would be satisfied with constitutional reform. 'I can hardly be suspected,' he said, 'of partiality for the Chancellor, but I declare I have more respect for his conduct on this occasion than for Lord Moira's. He is, at least, an open and avowed enemy.'—*Memoirs*, March, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> Speech of Lord Moira, February 18, 1798.

who had before been of the same opinion, had changed their minds, and were for immediate action. Further hesitation might bring the French in earnest. The arrest of the leaders might precipitate the insurrection, but would deprive it of its directing head; and if the rebels were forced into the field without their allies, they could be encountered with less extremity of peril. Anxious letters had passed and repassed during the first fortnight of February between Camden and the Duke of Portland,<sup>1</sup> which ended in the Duke leaving the Viceroy to act at his own discretion. It was from the discussion of this vital and most critical question that the Chancellor and the other ministers had been called away to listen to Lord Moira.

Lord Glentworth<sup>2</sup> was the first to reply. He contented himself with giving an outline of the United Irishmen's proceedings, so far as they were generally notorious. He read extracts from the patriot newspapers. He gave a list of the most atrocious of the late murders,<sup>3</sup> and detailed the particulars of the last. Colonel St. George dined at Mr. Uniacke's house on the 9th of February. As Mr. Uniacke and his wife

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<sup>1</sup> 'Irish Correspondence, February, 1798.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> Sexton Pery, so long Speaker of the House of Commons.

<sup>3</sup> One of the stories which Lord Glentworth mentioned is curiously illustrative of the time. A soldier of the Limerick Militia had informed an officer of his regiment

that attempts had been made to seduce him from his allegiance. The wife of one of the confederates was sent to pretend love to him. He was tempted a mile from his quarters, and while she had her arms round him, the hatchet of an accomplice split his skull.

were lighting him at night to his bedroom, fourteen men with blackened faces appeared on the landing-place from the back stairs, while others showed themselves below. Mrs. Uniacke threw herself before her husband. They flung her over the staircase on the pavement of the hall. They stabbed Uniacke through and through, and then hurled him down beside her. They attacked Colonel St. George next, killed him, slashed and hacked at him till they were tired, and then pitching his body on the bodies of his friends, they left them together in their blood.

The facts were not to be denied. A prelate of the Establishment, Dr. Dickson, Bishop of Down, was of Lord Moira's opinion, that such crimes could be best prevented by loving the perpetrators, who were misled by zeal for their country's cause.

Then rose Fitzgibbon. He had long waited for an opportunity to tell the truth about his country in terms which Europe should hear. The occasion had been created for him, and he used it. Lord Moira and his friends had been the fiercest advocates of the independence of the Irish Parliament. Fitzgibbon commenced with observing sarcastically on the impropriety of appeals to the British Legislature by a peer of Ireland against the Government established in Dublin. Then he passed rapidly to the substance of the accusations:—

'The noble lord has told the British peers that the Executive Government of Ireland has taught the soldiery to treat the natives of this country indis-

criminatedly as rebels, and to goad them with unexampled insult and barbarity; that the obsolete badge of servitude, the curfew, has been revived in its vigour and enforced with cruelty and insult; that the detestable principles and proceedings of the Inquisition have been introduced into Ireland; that the natives were tortured to extort from them a confession of their own guilt or that of others. These insolent and distorted exaggerations have passed into general circulation through every seditious and disaffected print in Great Britain and Ireland under the professed solemnity of the noble lord's oath.<sup>1</sup> It remains for me publicly and distinctly to refute the foul and injurious charges of tyranny and injustice which have been advanced against the Government and Parliament of Ireland.

'It has long been the fashion of this country to drown the voice of truth by loud and confident assertion. Since the separation of America from the British Empire, when the noble lord knows some British politicians successfully played a game of embarrassment against Lord North's Administration, they have been pleased to turn their attention to Ireland as a theatre of political warfare, and to lend their countenance to every faction which has reared its head in this country to disturb the public peace. When the noble lord recommends conciliation as a remedy for the state of this country, I conclude his

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<sup>1</sup> Moira had offered to swear to the truth of his charges.

information flows from this polluted source. If conciliation be the pledge of tranquillity, there is not a nation in Europe in which it has had so fair a trial as in Ireland. For twenty years there has been a liberal and unvaried system of conciliation and concession. Concession and conciliation have produced only a fresh stock of grievances, and the discontent of Ireland has kept pace with her prosperity.'

Running rapidly over the history of these twenty years, Fitzgibbon showed how the opening of the trade in 1779 had been followed in 1782 by the demands for political change; how a new Constitution had then been formed by Mr. Grattan and his friends; how the Commons had assured the King that thenceforward no question could arise to disturb the harmony of the two countries; yet how brief that harmony had been. Mr. Flood had discovered that the repeal of a law was not a renunciation of a principle; that the Constitution was a bubble, and that the noblemen and gentlemen who pretended to have emancipated Ireland were the accomplices of England's treachery. He then continued:—

'A Bill was introduced by Lord Grenville which passed into law without opposition, renouncing unequivocally all legislation or judicial authority in Ireland. The people of Ireland might now have taken breath and suspended their constitutional labours. But a new grievance was discovered—Parliament must be reformed. After due deliberation it was determined to elect a military Convention to meet



in the metropolis as the surest, most efficacious, and most constitutional organ through which to convey the sense of the nation. The Convention assembled with military pomp and parade, and assumed the form of a House of Parliament. A Bill for the reform of the representation of the people was regularly presented, read a first time, a second time, committed, reported, and agreed to, and being engrossed was sent at the point of the bayonet by two members of the Convention, who were also members of the House of Commons, to be registered by that assembly. The House of Commons treated this insult with the contempt which it merited. The Convention dispersed, and we had a short respite. But soon a new topic of discontent was started. It was discovered that the manufactures of Great Britain were imported into this country upon terms which gave them a preference in the Irish market, a preference which superior excellence alone can give them, and the remedy proposed was that we should commence a war of prohibitory duties, although it was notorious that the balance of trade was considerably in our favour; and if Parliament had been so infatuated as to yield to popular clamour, we had not the means of manufacturing woollen cloths sufficient for our wants. Hence came the memorable treaty of 1785 for a final adjustment of commercial intercourse. A fair and liberal offer was made by Great Britain to open her markets and share her capital with this country. The offer was unwisely rejected by the Irish House of Com-

mons under a silly deception. The people were taught to believe that it was an insidious artifice to revive the legislative authority of the British Parliament. In 1789 came the Regency question, when the intemperate, illegal, and precipitate conduct of the Irish Parliament shook our boasted Constitution to its foundations, and contributed to bring our country to its present alarming condition. A political schism followed. The author of it<sup>1</sup> founded a political club for the reformation of public abuses. It was announced to the world with a manifesto in which the British Government was charged with a deliberate and systematic conspiracy to subvert the liberties of Ireland. The measures proposed were a Place Bill, a Pension Bill, a Responsibility Bill. The debate on these subjects in the House of Commons was carried on in a series of disgusting invectives suited to the meridian of Billingsgate. The people were told that the British Government intended to subvert the liberties of the Irish nation, and their aim became thenceforward to subvert the Monarchy and separate the country from Great Britain. Clubs were formed of United Irishmen. Appeals were addressed to the Volunteers, beseeching them to resume their arms; a general outcry was raised of commiseration and love for the Catholics of Ireland, in which for the first time since the Reformation a great body of the Protestant Dissenters joined, and Catholic Emancipation

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<sup>1</sup> Grattan.

and Reform went forth as the watchwords of innovation and treason. The object of these Jacobin institutions was to detach the Catholics from the Catholic Committee, composed of the chief noblemen and gentlemen of their communion, and place them under a Jacobin Directory. The Catholics were stimulated to associate under the title of Defenders to disarm the Protestants, so finally to be relieved from tithes, taxes, and rent. A close correspondence existed between the Catholic Directory and the Irish Union. Orders were issued by the Jacobin clubs to levy regiments of National Guards all over the kingdom. . . . . The noble lord who imputes Irish disaffection to a system of coercion will please to recollect that the system of midnight robbery and avowed rebellion was completely established before any one coercive statute was enacted here. In 1792 and 1793 the project of levying a revolutionary army had been formed. Soldiers were forthcoming in abundance. I will tell the noble lord the conspiracy has been disclosed by evidence the most clear and satisfactory, by the testimony of gentlemen of rank and character, some of them at this moment high in military command in the King's service. The Parliament of Ireland did their duty in framing new laws to repress these outrages. If there be ground of censure on Parliament it is this, that the vigour was not proportioned to the magnitude and extent of the evil. Every man accused by the brotherhood of loyalty was stripped of his arms. If he presumed to defend him-

self he was murdered. The few magistrates who ventured to execute the law were marked for assassination, and many of them were murdered. In 1796 the Insurrection Act was passed. Magistrates in a proclaimed district were authorised to order all persons to remain in their houses and put out the lights after a certain hour of the night, and this the noble lord represents as a revival of the feudal badge of servitude, the curfew.<sup>1</sup> The United Irish combination is a complete revolutionary government organised against the law. Has the noble lord heard of the murders perpetrated by order of the Irish Union for the crime of putting the laws in execution? Has he heard of the murder of Mr. Butler, a clergyman and a magistrate? of Mr. Knipe, a clergyman and a magistrate? of Mr. Hamilton, a clergyman and a magistrate? of Mr. Cummins, whose crime was that he had enrolled in a Yeomanry Corps? of Colonel St. George and his host, Mr. Uniacke? of the

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<sup>1</sup> In this part of the speech Fitzgibbon remarked sharply on the state of Lord Moira's own estate, which he described as 'a main citadel of treason.' Lord Moira had fiercely denounced the picketing of a certain blacksmith. Fitzgibbon reminded him of what he had been pleased to omit, 'that the man did immediately discover the names of several persons for whom he had manufactured pike-heads, in consequence of which dis-

covery near two hundred pikes were seized.' 'He requested the noble lord to reflect on the number of probable murders which were prevented by that act of military severity; to consider whether the injury done to society by picketing that blacksmith was to be compared to the injury which must have risen from leaving two hundred pikes in the hands of rebels and assassins.'

two dragoons who discovered to their officers an attempt to seduce them? In a word, has he heard of the numberless and atrocious deeds of massacre and assassination which form part of the system of the Irish brotherhood, and are encouraged by the privileged order of innovators? I hold the dark and bloody catalogue, but I will not proclaim to the civilised world the state of cannibal barbarism to which my unhappy country has been brought back by these pestilent and cowardly traitors. These are the men of sentiment whom the noble lord is anxious to conciliate. These are the injured innocents whose cause he has so pathetically pleaded—innocents who deal in robbery, conflagration, and murder, and scatter terror and desolation over the face of this devoted country. The noble lord may contemplate this scene of horrors with coolness from another kingdom, but he will not be surprised that the gentlemen of Ireland whose existence is at stake do not view it with the same indifference. What alternative has been left to the Executive Government but to surrender at discretion to a horde of traitorous barbarians, or to use the force entrusted to it for self-defence and self-preservation? What would have been the folly and debility of a Government which would have hesitated to assist itself at such a crisis? Lord Camden issued an order to disarm the rebels in the Northern districts. If he had not issued that order he would have betrayed his trust. General Lake has executed this service with the moderation,

ability, and discretion which have marked his character as an officer and a gentleman.'

Such in outline, abridged and mutilated for purposes of necessary compression, was the once-celebrated oration in which the great Earl of Clare replied to the sentimental advocates of Irish murderers. True as his words were to the last fibre of them, and the more inevitably because they were true, they were received with a yell of fury by those from off whose crimes and follies he stripped the gilding of spurious patriotism; and the echoes of their execrations have rung on to the present age, as if an Irishman and one of themselves had sinned against Irish nationality by holding a mirror before it in which to behold its real image.

England, too, has behaved to Clare like herself. When the danger was passed she fell back into her old dream of conciliating the irreconcilable. She selected for political advancement the incendiaries of the Irish Parliament who had fostered the rebellion, the dangers of which they shrunk from sharing. She gave the Great Seal to Ponsonby, and she made Curran Master of the Rolls. She elevated Grattan by adulation into the most honoured place among the heroes of his country. She sent Moira as Governor-General to India. As in earlier times, she left the gentlemen who stood by her in her hour of trouble to the vengeance of the patriots, caring no more for them when they had served her turn, so when Clare died, the best friend she ever had, she gave a sigh of relief at being rid of his oppressive presence. She permitted the

scum of Dublin to dishonour his open grave, and she has left his memory to be trampled on lest she should offend the prejudice of later generations of patriots by confessing the merits of the greatest statesman whom Ireland ever produced.

On one person in Europe, whose opinion at that time happened to be of consequence in these Irish matters, the speech, perhaps, was not without effect. Copies of it were circulated in France, and Wolfe Tone, who could not refuse his admiration of Clare's courage, brought it under the eye of Napoleon, in the hope that he might be encouraged to head the army of invasion in person by the confirmation which it contained of Tone's own representations of the humour of the Irish people.

Napoleon never said what he thought of it, but from that time he listened coldly to the advice of the Directory to make Ireland a principal scene of his duel with England. The chosen friends of the Irish in Paris were the Jacobins, whose principles they adopted, and whose affectations they caricatured. Napoleon did not admire Jacobins, either native or foreign. He had no desire to assist a half-insane nation to an independence which would be a scandal to Europe. The Directory adhered to their views, and acted on them to their misfortune and discredit; but Napoleon, says Wolfe Tone's son, in a memoir of his father, disliked the Irish leaders, refused to appreciate Ireland's importance to him, and when Ireland was waiting to receive him carried his arms to Egypt.

## SECTION II.

INTELLIGENCE more and more alarming continued to be received at the Castle. The intimate know-  
 ledge of their proceedings displayed by Fitz-<sup>1798</sup>  
 gibbon quickened the movements of the conspirators. On the 26th of February a member of the Revolutionary Committee in the pay of Pelham wrote to tell him 'that the military organisation was almost complete.' 'Gentlemen of considerable property were daily uniting.' 'The number of fighting men was increasing with astonishing celerity.' 'The public officers, those in the law departments especially, were furnishing recruits.' 'The Yeomanry were shaking.' 'The clerks in the bankers', merchants', and traders' houses were reckoned upon almost to a man.' Dublin Castle itself was not pure from infection, and 'there was scarcely a house where there were three male servants which could not boast of a domiciliary Committee.' 'The number of men in all Ireland who had returned their names on that day as prepared to take arms was 279,896. Carlow, Meath, Wicklow, Kerry, even Down and Antrim, notwithstanding Lake's exertions, had reported themselves ready to begin. Connaught, however, was still behindhand. The Committee had passed a resolution that the counties which had completed their organisation had deserved well of their country, but had requested



them to bear their tyranny a little longer, till the whole country should be in a condition to move simultaneously.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord Camden sent the communication to Portland on the day that it was received. A few hours later another informer presented himself at the Castle, of more consequence, who ultimately consented to give public evidence.

Thomas Reynolds, a Dublin silk-merchant, had purchased an estate in Kildare. The coming of the French fleet to Bantry had led him to expect another attempt which might be successful. The landing of a French army, he had assured himself, would be followed by a revolution, and he had therefore been sworn in as a United Irishman. In his new county he had become acquainted with the Fitzgeralds. Lord Edward had given him a colonel's commission in the insurgent army. He was treasurer besides, and a member of the Committee. A chance conversation at a dinner-table had first alarmed him as to the prudence of his conduct. He had been further agitated by Lord Edward telling him on the 19th of February, perhaps after Clare's speech, that he was afraid of arrest, and was going to Paris to see Talleyrand and hasten the French expedition. Arrest was a word of ominous sound. Reynolds put himself in communication with Pelham. He told him when and at

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<sup>1</sup> 'Enclosure in a letter from Lord Camden to Portland, February 26, 1798.' S.P.O.

what hours the Revolutionary Committee met. He pointed out how they might be all captured, together with their incriminating papers.

It happened that at this particular time Lord Downshire's friend was in London, and Pelham knew it. If the friend could be brought over, and could be induced to give evidence, a case could then be established against all the United Irish leaders. They could be prosecuted with certainty of conviction, and the secrets of the plot could be revealed so fully that the reality of it could no longer be doubted.

Most earnestly Camden begged Portland to impress on 'the friend' the necessity of compliance. 'Patriotism might induce him to overcome his natural prejudice.' If patriotism was insufficient, 'there was no reward which he ought not to receive.'<sup>1</sup>

Portland's answer was not encouraging:—

'The friend,' he said, 'shall be detained. As to his coming over to you, I have reason to believe that there is not any consideration upon earth which would tempt him to undertake it. He is convinced that he would go to utter destruction. Better he should stay here and open a correspondence with some of the principal conspirators, by which means you may be apprised of their intentions. If I could be satisfied, or if you would give it as your positive opinion, that this person's testimony or presence would crush the conspiracy, or bring any principal traitor to justice,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland. March 1.' S.P.O.

I should not, and Lord Downshire would not, hesitate in using any influence to prevail on his friend to run any risk for such an object. But if he should fail, and escape with his life, he could render no further service. Weigh well, therefore, the consequence of such a sacrifice.’<sup>1</sup>

Every day’s delay made the situation more dangerous, and Camden’s position more embarrassing. Evidently neither Pitt nor Portland had yet realised the urgency of the peril, yet each morning brought its fresh tale of murders. In the first week in March two magistrates were killed in open day in Kildare. In the body of one of them was found the bayonet of a Militiaman. A group of labourers were looking on while the work was done, and the perpetrators walked coolly away. The Orange lodges offered their services, and organised for their own defence. The English mind had been so poisoned against the name of Orangemen by stupid and lying declamation that the Viceroy was afraid to employ them, but felt himself compelled ‘to repress their demonstrations;’ while the insurgent leaders, though each one of them was known, were allowed to pursue their machinations unharmed. The House of Commons was indignant at what it called the timidity of the Government, and clamoured for the reimposition of the Penal Laws. Those best affected to Government were loudest in demanding measures of most extreme severity. In

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Portland to Camden, March 7.’ S.P.O.

the country the magistrates were prostrated with fear. 'It was equally difficult,' the Viceroy said, 'to repress the zealous and to give courage to the timid.'<sup>1</sup>

At this moment his difficulties were needlessly aggravated. An officer of experience was required at the head of the Irish army; and, <sup>1798</sup> Cornwallis having declined, the choice of the Government fell on Sir Ralph Abercrombie, who had just distinguished himself in the West Indies. The English line regiments had been almost entirely recalled from Ireland for service abroad. The troops in the island consisted of a handful of Germans, a very few regiments of British Fencibles, the rest, and by far the largest proportion, being the Irish Yeomanry and the distrusted and uncertain Irish Militia. The Yeomanry, though thoroughly loyal,<sup>2</sup> had received no military training. They had volunteered their services to grapple with the unseen enemy who for years had been the terror of their families, had compelled every Protestant house to convert itself into a fortress, and had filled the domestic life of Protestant Ireland with the most painful anxiety. Yeomen and farmers had left their ploughs at the invitation of their landlords; men of business had forsaken their desks; gentlemen had joined with their Protestant servants to encounter

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<sup>1</sup> 'See two extremely interesting letters from Lord Camden to Portland, March 6 and March 10.'

<sup>2</sup> Catholics afterwards joined the Yeomanry, with a deliberate purpose of treachery.

and subdue this horrible nightmare. They were scattered in small detachments over the country doing police work, and therefore as soldiers were necessarily disorganised.

The Militia regiments had been assailed secretly with perpetual invitations to mutiny. They, too, had never been regularly disciplined. Their officers in many instances were the worst of the worst class in Ireland—the pretenders to the name of gentlemen. Abercrombie, entirely ignorant of Ireland, prepossessed by prejudices against the Castle Government, and perhaps under the influence of Lord Moira, was outraged at the condition in which he found the army which he was sent to command. Instead of looking into its real quality—instead of endeavouring to understand its motley elements, and fashion them into shape, he assumed that the disorder was but an illustration of universal mismanagement. Without saying a word to any one, without paying the Viceroy so much as the compliment of consulting him, he issued an order immediately on his arrival which was a censure on the Executive Government. He told the troops that they were in a state of licentiousness which rendered them formidable to every one but the enemy. On his own responsibility he superseded Lord Camden's orders, and forbade the soldiers to act anywhere under any circumstances in suppressing riots, arresting criminals, or in any other function, without the presence and authority of a magistrate.

The hopelessness of exertion on the part of the

magistrates, whom as residents in the country it was unfair to expose to the vengeance of the people, had compelled Camden to pass their duties over to military officers. In issuing an order in direct contradiction of the Lord-Lieutenant, Sir Ralph Abercrombie was himself setting a most signal example of the insubordination which he condemned; and had he been as right essentially as he was utterly wrong and headstrong, his manner of proceeding would have been without excuse.

Lord Camden was unwilling to create a disturbance. He quietly sent round a circular to each officer who held a separate command renewing his own instructions. Abercrombie, he trusted, would see the reason for them when he had larger experience. To Abercrombie himself he said nothing. In his letter to the Cabinet he passed the matter over in silence. His own desire was that it should pass unnoticed.<sup>1</sup> It was in England that attention was first drawn to the ill-omened order, and Camden was blamed by the Cabinet under the impression that he had sanctioned it.

'An extraordinary sensation has been created,' Portland wrote, on the 11th of March, 'by Sir Ralph Abercrombie's general order. Can it be genuine? And if genuine, for what purpose was it issued, and how was it allowed? Our friends here cannot repress

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<sup>1</sup> Yet Lord Camden has been dismissed, as too just and too universally accused by Irish writers humane to execute the cruelties of having procured Abercrombie's which he intended.

their regret at the triumph which they conceive Lord Moira and his adherents, and indeed all the disaffected, will claim over the Chancellor and the heads of your Government. The Irish whom I have seen, and whose conversation has been reported to me, conceive that there must be some division in the Government; that you must have been deluded or intimidated; that protection is to be withdrawn from them; that they will be sacrificed, or forced to join the insurgents. I assure your Excellency I must request a full and immediate explanation, which will enable me to give that satisfaction to our friends and to the public in general which has hitherto uniformly attended every measure of your Excellency's Administration.'<sup>1</sup>

It was, of course, easy for Camden to reply, by telling the literal truth. 'To have noticed the order in the manner which his feelings dictated,' he had feared, 'might have had an injurious effect on the King's service.' 'Sir Ralph might have resigned, or have been recalled, and the Council were all agreed that his leaving the country on such a ground, immediately after his arrival, would have a bad effect in the country.' 'He had therefore passed it over and explained it away, and in Ireland it was already forgotten.'

The attention called to the matter in England obliged Camden to communicate to Abercrombie the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Portland to Camden, March 11, 1798.'

contents of Portland's letter. He discharged his task 'as delicately as possible,' with the strongest expressions of personal respect. The spirit in which Abercrombie received the reproof throws a painful light on the motives with which the order was issued, and shows how far in that unhappy time the sense of duty in the soldier was obscured by the passions of the politician. He refused to see Lord Camden; he wrote a letter to him, in which, although his knowledge of Ireland was but a few weeks old, he repeated Lord Moira's accusations, and declared the policy of the Castle to be the cause of the disquiet of the country. Lord Camden had pressed him to retain the command, as his retirement at such a moment could not fail to weaken further the shaken authority of the Government. Abercrombie closed a petulant defence of his conduct with an abrupt resignation.<sup>1</sup>

In this instance Lord Camden had not to complain of half-hearted support from home. Both the King and the Cabinet expressed their strongest satisfaction with Camden's forbearance and discretion. They felt as he felt, that the resignation, if persisted in, would be taken as a censure on the Viceroy, and a direct encouragement to the rebellion. Entirely unacquainted as Abercrombie necessarily was with the secret information on which Lord Camden was acting, they were willing to pass over his mistake.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 13.' S.P.O.



but they entreated him not to add to their difficulties by persevering in it.

But either Abercrombie had come to Ireland primed by Lord Moira, and predetermined to thwart the Government (and if this was the explanation his acceptance of the command without informing the Cabinet of his views was entirely indefensible), or on imperfect knowledge he had taken a rash and ill-considered step, the effects of which he was bound to repair. But his vanity had been wounded by what he construed into a public affront. 'He admitted that he had been misinformed,' 'but it made no difference.' 'He refused to make any concession to the wounded feelings of the country, or remedy the effects of his indiscretion.'<sup>1</sup> 'We must, therefore,' said Camden, 'accept the resignation; and I transmit his request, though with sensations the most painful. The awful situation of this kingdom cannot be too early or too attentively the subject of the deliberation of his Majesty's Ministers. Sir Ralph Abercrombie has withdrawn himself from the command in a manner calculated, I venture to say, more to shake his Majesty's interests in Ireland than any other event could have produced. The army will suppose that they have gained a victory over Sir Ralph Abercrombie, and all that was amiss will grow worse.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 26.' S.P.O.

<sup>2</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 26.'

## SECTION III.

IF Sir Ralph Abercrombie had been on the watch for a moment when, by leaving the army without a head, he could best forward the interests of the <sup>1798</sup> insurgents, he could not have selected a more appropriate occasion. Fitzgibbon's language in the House of Lords, and whispers of treachery among themselves, had given the Executive Committee of the rebellion reason to suspect that their persons were known to the Government, and that further delay would be unsafe. Lawless had gone to London to see the French agent. Fitzgerald had spoken of the probability of his arrest, and of his intention of going to Paris, to quicken Talleyrand. Fitzgerald, perhaps, felt that he could not be spared. and Arthur O'Connor was despatched instead of him. Among the Irish at Paris, Wolfe Tone mentions a priest named O'Coigly, abbreviated into Quigley, as having been there in the summer of 1797, attached to the faction of Napper Tandy. This Quigley, a ready, busy, cunning person, was skilful in disguises, and had learnt the art of passing to and fro without detection. He had returned to Dublin in the winter following. He had been with Lord Edward at Leinster House. He was now going back to Paris, and Arthur O'Connor was to go in his company. O'Connor had been released from prison on his recognizances. His movements were suspected; he was called on to appear

and take his trial, but he was already gone. It was represented that he had been summoned to England on private affairs, and the excuse was accepted.

On the 27th of February three strange gentlemen appeared at the 'King's Head,' at Margate. They had come from Whitstable, and had brought with them a cart full of luggage. They called themselves officers, and gave the names of Captain Jones, Colonel Morris, and Mr. Williams. They said that they were on their way to Deal, and that they wanted a conveyance for their boxes. They remained for the night at the 'King's Head;' and the servants of the hotel, with the usual curiosity of such persons, questioned the driver of the Whitstable cart as to whence they came, and who they were. The driver's impression was that they were concerned in some smuggling transaction. They had applied to the boatmen at Whitstable to take them across to Flushing. The Whitstable men had set their terms too high, and the driver thought that they meant to try elsewhere. Further inquiry brought out that they had spoken on the same subject to some fishermen at Margate. Strangers in those times of jealous loyalty, seeking a secret passage to the Continent, were persons to be watched. A hint was given to the police, and the next morning, when the party were at breakfast, two officers entered the room, and asked them for an account of themselves. Their story was not ready. They pretended to be unknown to each other, and to have met accidentally at Margate. It was immediately

proved that Captain Jones and Colonel Morris had slept in the same room at Whitstable. They denied the luggage to be theirs. It was proved that they had engaged the cart in which it was brought, and that they had spoken of taking it with them to Deal.

The situation became serious. They were searched. In a great-coat which was hanging in the room, was found a pocket-book, and in the pocket-book was a letter addressed to the Executive Directory of France. The letter when opened was found so absurd as almost to disarm suspicion. To solid Englishmen, inexperienced in Irish political compositions, it seemed like the production of a lunatic. 'With the tyranny of England the tyranny of Europe was to fall.' The great nation was invited 'to pour out its gigantic force.' 'Its triumphs had been watched with rapture. The friends of liberty in England, Ireland, and Scotland had united to forward the common and glorious cause. The sacred flame of freedom was kindled. The United Islands were longing to break their chains, and were waiting with impatience to see the hero of Italy and his brave veterans on their shores.'

Dangerous conspirators did not usually carry compromising documents in coat-pockets, nor expose their lives for the sake of communicating to a foreign power such grotesque nonsense. Except for the lies which they had told, and for their appearance which showed them to be gentlemen, the party might have escaped

with a few hours in the parish stocks. But there was an evident mystery about them. They and their boxes were sent under a guard to London, when Captain Jones was found to be the priest O'Coigly, Colonel Morris to be Arthur O'Connor, and Williams to be an English revolutionist named Binns. O'Connor wrote a hurried note to Lord Edward, telling him not to be alarmed, nothing having been taken upon them which compromised any individual. The messenger to whom the note was entrusted was unfortunate or treacherous, for it fell into the hands of the Government.<sup>1</sup>

Had O'Connor known the connection between the Government and Lord Downshire's friend, he would have felt less confident. There was evidence, if it could only be produced, which would send both Lord Edward and himself to the scaffold. As matters stood, he had been caught red-handed in his mission of treason. The Government was in the absurd position of being driven to prove, by imperfect and inferential testimony, what they knew to be beyond the shadow of doubt, and to risk the chance of defeat when defeat would be a victory to rebellion. But there was now no alternative. The three prisoners were committed for high treason, and a special commission was appointed to try them.

The arrest of O'Connor and his companions rendered immediate action necessary in Dublin. The

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 6.' S.P.O.

Committee would take alarm, and either give the signal for the rising, or disperse and assemble elsewhere. Camden had been left to act at his discretion. Papers might be seized which would of themselves be sufficient for the conviction of the most guilty, or would supply links which might be missing at Maidstone. At any rate, this knot of dangerous men could no longer be suffered to remain at liberty. Reynolds gave notice at the Castle that a full meeting was to be held on the 12th of March at No. 12, Bridge Street—the house of one of the members, a merchant, Oliver Bond. The Committee was in two bodies—the General Committee and the Executive Council of the Committee, which was weekly changed. Both these bodies would be found sitting. The Executive Council on the 12th of March would consist of Mr. Jackson, MacCormick,<sup>1</sup> MacCann, Barclay Teeling, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

On the 11th Lord Camden informed the Cabinet of the resolution which had been taken to seize them all, and 'having drawn the sword,' to arrest every other person who was known to be implicated.

'The universal opinion of his Majesty's servants,' Camden wrote, 'the temper of the friends of Government, and the inconceivable mischief produced by the machinations of this Committee have induced Mr. Pelham and myself to think the measure one of policy. The longer it is delayed, the better the country

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<sup>1</sup> 'Wolfe Tone's Magog, the secretary of the Catholic Committee.'

will be organised. The timid are joining, the zealous are becoming lukewarm. Murders are every day committed, and gentlemen are driven from the country. The assizes approach, and neither grand nor petty juries will be found. It must be shown that the Government is not afraid to act, and the capture of the heads of the conspiracy must be followed by the march of troops into the parts of the country most disturbed. If we delay longer we shall be driven by Parliament into more rigorous measures. There is not a second opinion as to the necessity of the arrest.'<sup>1</sup>

The seizure was effected easily, though unhappily with incomplete success. Major Swan, an officer of the police, repaired at the time indicated by Reynolds to the house in Bridge Street, with twelve policemen in plain clothes. They burst in the door, and surprised the General Committee in full session. Eighteen were secured—secured had they known it from the consequences of their own treason. MacNeven, Addys Emmett, Sweetman, two Jacksons, Oliver Bond himself, and twelve others were made prisoners. An attempt was made to throw the papers in the fire, which Major Swan promptly stopped by drawing a pistol; but there was no resistance. The Executive Committee sat in an inner room. Of them Jackson was taken. Lord Edward, MacCann, MacCormick, and Teeling had either escaped or had not

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 11, 1798.' S.P.O.

arrived. Warrants were sent out for their apprehension. Their houses were searched and their papers carried off. In Lord Edward's room, at Leinster House, were found many letters, some in cypher, some in ordinary hand. Of the cyphers a key was discovered in O'Connor's dressing-case which was taken with his luggage at Maidstone. The letters read by the help of it referred to his journey to France. Quigley had denied that he had come from Dublin. A note from him proved that he had been at Leinster House on business of importance.<sup>1</sup>

The capture by the police of so many conspicuous patriots created, of course, the most vehement excitement. The people gathered in knots, talking eagerly and full of curiosity, but there were no open signs of anger, and quiet citizens drew their breath with a sigh of relief. Lord Edward seemed to have disappeared. Rumours said that he had gone north to his brother at Ardglass, and from thence would escape out of the country. Orders were sent to every port to be on the watch for him, and a strict and silent search was maintained in Dublin and the neighbourhood.

Leaving Lord Edward for the moment, the story

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<sup>1</sup> The note was like the address found in the coat pocket, and is a curious illustration of the stilted temper of the period :—

'Dublin, January 14, 1798.

'Citizen,—You will please to remain at home to-morrow, as I

intend to call on you precisely at seven in the evening, and talk over that business of the letter, and other affairs of that business likewise.

'JAMES COIGLY.

'To Citizen Fitzgerald,

'commonly called

'Lord Edward Fitzgerald.'



reverts to the Margate prisoners. Their trial was no sooner determined on than they became objects of the most powerful interest. The Opposition, for reasons known to themselves, erected O'Connor into a political hero. They affected to see in him an intended victim of the savage and barbarous Government which was driving Ireland into rebellion, and forcing into exile the noblest of her sons. He was the proprietor of the 'Press' newspaper, and the 'Press' was the advocate of assassination. No matter. Round O'Connor were centered for the time the energy, the intellect, and the passion of the great Whig party of England.

The preparations for the trial were elaborately careful. Three judges—Sir Francis Buller, Sir Soulden Lawrence, and Sir John Heath—were placed on the commission. Lord Romney presided, as Lord Lieutenant of Kent. Scott, Mitford, and Abbott conducted the case for the Crown. Plumer, Dallas, Gurney, and Fergusson appeared for the prisoners. The evidence against Quigley was that he was carrying a treasonable letter to the Directory. The coat in which it was found was proved, in spite of his denials, to belong to him. He could offer no explanation of it, and the account which he gave of himself was found to be a tissue of falsehoods. Against O'Connor, the direct evidence being still unproducible, the Crown alleged his companionship with Quigley, the letters found in Leinster House, to which the cypher which he was carrying was the key, referring to an invasion which he was going to France to procure, and the

numberless contradictions in which he had involved himself, and which proved that he had something to conceal. Quigley's defence was desperate from the first. O'Connor's would have been desperate but for the weight of evidence to character which was brought to his rescue. Plumer pleaded for him that he was a gentleman of rank and fortune, Lord Longueville's nephew, the intimate associate and friend of the most distinguished statesmen of the day. To suppose that such a person would implicate himself in treason was absurd. He had the misfortune to differ in principle from the existing administration of Ireland. He had been already unjustly imprisoned, and he was going abroad to escape further ill-usage. The cyphered letter was allowed to be a mystery. It certainly seemed to refer to the introduction of a French force; but if Mr. O'Connor had really contemplated such a thing he could not be found guilty on the indictment, for he was charged with compassing the invasion of England, and if the allusion in the letter was to an invasion at all, it was the invasion of Ireland. These shifts would not of themselves have availed to save him. So evidently was he on some dangerous errand when he was taken, that he was found to have conveyed his property to his kinsman, Sir Francis Burdett, before he started upon it. Not only the evidence already in possession of the Ministers, but his own subsequent confession proved that of all the Irish traitors he was the falsest and wickedest; he had published sentiments in his newspaper, under the signature of

'A Child of Satan,' in the fullest keeping with the assumed fatherhood of their author; yet the most distinguished members of the Opposition in both Houses of the British Parliament presented themselves to give evidence in this precious miscreant's favour.

Lord Moira came to declare his admiration of him, though he must have been acquainted with the wild and traitorous address which had been the occasion of his first imprisonment.

Erskine claimed O'Connor as a personal friend, protested that O'Connor's sentiments were his own, and declared him incapable of a dishonourable action. O'Connor, he said, was going abroad. He had seen him in London on his way from Ireland, and had himself advised him to go, though the friend whom he was thus counselling was avowedly at large on his recognizances.

Charles James Fox was the next witness. He had known O'Connor for four years, and professed to regard him as well affected, enlightened, and attached to the Constitution and the Crown.

One after another these great persons deposed to the same story, at the cost either of their conscience or their understanding. Sheridan had talked often with O'Connor on Irish politics. They agreed in their detestation of the present Administration; but, in the face of the address to the people of Ireland, Sheridan said O'Connor had always repudiated the thought of applying to France for assistance.

Grattan, who had come to England for the trial,

declared that he admired and honoured O'Connor, and dared to say, though on his oath, that he was certain that he could not approve of a French invasion. The Duke of Norfolk considered that there was no difference of opinion between Mr. O'Connor and himself. So did Lord John Russell, so did Lord Oxford, so did Lord Thanet, so did Samuel Whitbread. Grey and Lauderdale were in attendance, and willing to be sworn, but were not called upon.

Either these illustrious persons believed what they were saying—and if they believed it, distempered party spirit had made their judgment blind—or they so detested the Irish Administration and all belonging to it, that they considered treason itself as the excess of a spirit which was generally virtuous, and rather merited applause than censure. Buller summed up fatally against Quigley. Of O'Connor, on the ground of the uncertainty of the evidence and the array of testimony to his general excellence, Buller almost directed the acquittal.

The jury obeyed the Judge's instructions. The meaner villain was found guilty. Arthur O'Connor, another Phelim O'Neil, with the polish of cultivation externally, and with the inner nature of a savage, heard a verdict recorded in his favour. He was leaving the court in triumph, but the Government knew their man too well to let him go so easily. He was at once re-arrested on another charge, and was restored to his quarters in Dublin Castle.

Efforts too were made to save Quigley from the last

penalty of the law. When they proved in vain, and he was brought out to die, he inflicted such revenge as was still within his reach on the oppressors of his country, by protesting from the scaffold that his life had been sworn away by perjury, that the papers in his pocket had been placed there by other hands, and that he died a murdered man.

In Maidstone Gaol he composed a sketch of his life. His blood, he said, was from the old Irish tribes. Not one of the plundering settlers did he count among his ancestors. His family had been stripped of the best of their lands by James the First. The remnant of them had fought against Cromwell, and had suffered under his confiscations. They must have been restored under the Act of Settlement, for he said that one of them sat for Tyrone in the Parliament of James the Second. His great-grandfather on his mother's side was killed, with seven of his brothers, at the Boyne. Another great-grandfather had constructed the famous boom at Derry, and with three of his brothers was killed at Aghrim. The Orangemen had attacked his father's house, had wounded his father, and had murdered his mother. They had destroyed his own library, his carefully collected materials for a history of Ireland, and had driven him out as a wanderer over the face of the earth. The bravado with which he took leave of life deprives the story of all claim to be believed. The truth, if truth it contained, cannot be separated from the falsehood, and his obvious design was to represent himself as a member of a family which had

devoted itself for the liberties of Ireland. The journal of Wolfe Tone places his connection with the intrigues with the Directory beyond the shadow of a doubt, yet to the last he declared his innocence upon oath. A priest was sent to prepare him for death. The threat of the refusal of the Sacraments failed to wring from him a word of confession. He wrote to Portland, saying that he was one of his lordship's messengers extraordinary to the other world charged with tidings of his merciful Administration.

A day or two before his death he composed an address to the people of Ireland, to whose cause he was falling a sacrifice. He secured the preservation of an exact account of his closing behaviour. He would not have his death thrown away by the manner of it being belied, and from the platform below the gallows on Pennington Heath, where he suffered, he repeated 'firmly and distinctly,' 'without passion and without extravagance,' that he was an innocent man.

So, with a certain courage—for according to his professed creed he was risking his soul for his revenge—this miserable being, who had been raised by accident into momentary and tragic visibility, was swung off and died.

Dying declarations of innocence always throw a certain doubt on the justice of an execution. By his persistence he dealt a blow not wholly ineffective at the Government which he abhorred, and raised himself in the estimation of the patriots, who were as well assured of his guilt as of their own.

'Quigley,' recorded Wolfe Tone in his journal, 'has behaved admirably well, which is more than I expected. He has behaved like a hero.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Trials of Arthur O'Connor and James Quigley, at Maidstone, May, 1798.'—*State Trials*, vols. xxvi. xxvii. | *Journal of Wolfe Tone*, June 12 and June 18, 1798.

## SECTION IV.

THE seizure of the Committee restored confidence in Dublin. The House of Commons demanded an immediate prosecution. But the evidence was <sup>1798</sup> still inadequate. Reynolds, the informer, hung back as yet from appearing publicly. The papers taken, though justifying the arrest, and proving that the Committee generally were engaged in organising and directing an intended insurrection, were insufficient, in the Attorney-General's opinion, to sustain an indictment for high treason against any individual. The prisoners were therefore left for the present in Newgate. The Cabinet congratulated Camden on his success, and encouraged him warmly to persevere, after so happy a commencement, in the same direction.<sup>1</sup> He was left to his unfettered judgment, the Duke of Portland, however, offering a few suggestions.

‘Now, when the Viceroy was displaying his power,’ the Duke thought there was a favourable opportunity for making a provision for the Catholic clergy. It would be a timely encouragement to loyalty. It would disarm misrepresentation. It would convince moderate Catholics that they were interested in supporting the Government. It might tend also to separate the Catholics from the Presbyterians—‘an object considered

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Portland to Camden, March 17.’



always so desirable and of so much importance,' that the Duke 'could not avoid bringing it again under Lord Camden's consideration.'<sup>1</sup>

With these notions Portland combined others not usually thought compatible with them. He desired the priests to be conciliated, but he wished also to encourage everywhere the friends of order. Camden had been reproached with favouring the Orangemen. He had, in fact, been cold and hostile to them. Portland considered that the assistance of a body of which alone the United Irishmen confessed themselves afraid was not to be lightly thrown away. 'I heard yesterday,' he wrote, 'that the Orange Association in Ulster has been joined by all the principal gentry and well-affected persons of property in that province, for the purpose of protecting themselves against the United Irishmen, and that they have bound themselves by an oath to defend the King and the Constitution. Associations of any sort unless authorised by Government are not generally to be countenanced; but, considering the circumstances of these times, and the necessity of counteracting the attempts of our domestic enemies, exertions of this kind may do more than all the military force you could apply towards the establishment of order. The example may produce the best effects in other parts of the kingdom, and may give you a disposable force to be carried to the South. The sense of danger and the proper spirit which has prompted

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<sup>1</sup> Portland to Camden, March 20.'

this combination may dispose those who have entered into it to allow your Excellency to methodise, direct, and bring them into the state of subordination which may enable you to employ their zeal to the best advantage.'<sup>1</sup>

Had Camden's Administration been actuated by the fanatical spirit of Protestant ascendancy which it is usually said to have represented, the Viceroy would have caught at a permission to accept assistance which would have relieved him of all anxiety for the possible success of the rebellion. He had shrunk from the Orangemen, and he shrank from them still, because he held it inconsistent with the duty of the representative of the Sovereign to raise again the banner of the Boyne, or to arm Protestants against Catholics. His forbearance was the more creditable to him, because he had cause to know that Catholic loyalty, even where most loudly professed, was from the lips outwards. He was unable to accept Portland's advice on either side.

'As to a provision for the Catholic clergy,' he replied, 'the temper of the country will not bear it at present. There seems much reason to think that the Catholics in general are not hostile to these commotions; that even the most loyal of them wait with some hope that a revolution in Ireland will restore them to the possessions and the consequence that they have lost.' As for the Orangemen, Lord Camden was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Portland to Camden, March 24.' S. P. O.

still under the spell of the remarkable theory that the secret of governing Ireland was to humour the enemies of the British connection and to look coldly on its friends. He did not deny that there were among them 'very respectable persons.' Their present numbers were forty thousand; they were likely to increase, and in the event of open rebellion might possibly be useful. He should therefore take no steps to suppress or dissolve their lodges. To encourage them, however, would, he said, 'much increase the jealousy of the Catholics.' In 'the dreadfully disturbed' condition of the South 'he feared to recommend the employing one party in the kingdom to put down another.' 'Many of the Orangemen,' he believed, 'would enter regiments, either in the Yeomanry or the Militia.' 'They are the persons,' he added, with involuntary compliment, 'most to be trusted with arms in either kingdom.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord Camden was rejecting assistance which at that moment would have been of invaluable service. Having drawn the sword, there was no longer room for pause. It was obviously necessary to utilise the confusion which had been created by the arrest of the Revolutionary Committee, and to disarm Leinster and Munster by the same measures which had been found effective in Ulster, before the conspirators could repair the blow and elect a new Directory. For this purpose he was obliged to appeal to General Abercrombie.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 29, 1798.'

The Cabinet had been shocked at Abercrombie's persistence in resigning the command. Portland feared that Camden himself, weary of calumny and sick of so ungrateful and dangerous a service, might himself follow the example.<sup>1</sup> He declared Abercrombie's conduct to be most 'injustifiable and distressing.' He insisted that Abercrombie should remain at his post till a successor could be provided for him; and as the circumstances admitted of no delay, Abercrombie was called on to undertake the work of disarmament. He seemed to have come to Ireland to effect the utmost extremity of mischief which his opportunities allowed him. Instead of complying, he said that the whole country was disaffected. The troops were as disloyal as the people. He could rely neither on the Yeomanry nor the Militia, and 'ten thousand additional troops must be drawn from Great Britain' if the disarmament was to be persevered in.<sup>2</sup>

The rebels soon rallied when they saw hesitation in following up the arrest. On the 30th of March Lord Camden reported that another magistrate, Mr. Darragh of Eagle Hill, of Kildare, had been murdered on his own lawn. A man brought him a petition, and shot

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<sup>1</sup> 'You, at whatever sacrifice, we entreat to remain at your post. I think the existence of Ireland would be endangered, and its ruin would ensue, were you to give up the Government; and, severe as the avowal of such a sentiment undoubtedly is, I should neither

do my duty to my country nor to you were I to conceal it, or omit to add that there is not, in my opinion, any person existing who would fill your place.'—'Portland to Camden, March 31.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Sir Ralph Abercrombie to Lord Camden, March 27.'

him while he was reading it.<sup>1</sup> The plundering of private houses began again. Villages had been attacked at noon-day. Large bodies of insurgents had collected and fired upon the troops. On the 28th of March a thousand men, well dressed and well appointed, many of them in regimental boots and pantaloons, rode into Cahir, in Tipperary, posted guards at the entrances of the town, examined every Protestant house, Lord Cahir's among them, and carried off all the arms which they found.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Pennefather, who commanded a Yeomanry corps at Cashel, reported himself surrounded by swarms of armed insurgents, and begged for help. Similar accounts came from Tipperary, Limerick, and Cork. The Privy Council unanimously decided that the troops must be put in motion. Even Abercrombie, who was at the meeting, appeared to acquiesce in the necessity, and professed himself 'willing to proceed to the disturbed districts and suppress the insurrection.'<sup>3</sup>

A proclamation was sent out, resembling that which had been issued in Ulster by Lake. The country was declared in rebellion. The people were summoned to give up their arms. The army received instructions to act as might be necessary for the restoration of order, and if the arms were refused to take them by force.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Darragh had been reported, utterly without foundation, to have 'wished he was ankle-deep in Catholic blood.' For this the secret tribunal had sentenced

him to death.

<sup>2</sup> 'Camden to Portland, March 30.' S.P.O.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

No sooner was the proclamation out than Abercrombie had changed his mind. Letters had reached him from England in which he learnt the Cabinet's displeasure with his conduct. He spoke of himself as 'disgraced and ruined.' If the troops were to go, he said that he could not accompany them. Camden told him that the proclamation had been issued in reliance on his promise. If his objections were so strong as he now stated them to be, he ought to have said so at the Council.

At issue with himself, his sense of honour and propriety contending with some inner feeling which remained unexplained, he seemed to master his unwillingness. 'He said immediately that he would go; that under the peculiar circumstances in which he stood he would act with redoubled zeal; that he would not quit the South of Ireland till it was quiet, and the arms restored.'

With these words Abercrombie left the Viceroy, who was thus allowed to suppose that his orders would be carried out.

Abercrombie had scarcely left the Castle than another informer presented himself, whose name does not transpire, but who, like Reynolds, was a member of the General Committee. This gentleman told the Viceroy that the blow dealt in the arrest had been less effective than he had hoped; that the mischief had been

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to the Duke of Portland, April 2.'

repaired, and the vacant places on the Committee had been refilled. Had Major Swan arrived two hours later, he would have seized fifty of them, and among the rest 'Curran, who was to have been proposed for the Committee of a Hundred.' 'The Committee had honorary members, of whom Grattan was one.' 'Grattan had been offered all terms if he would fairly engage, but he looked on.'<sup>1</sup>

Some few further particulars this person added as to the insurgents' present condition and prospects. The French Directory had definitely promised to land an army, and it might be looked for before the end of the current month. They were to receive three millions sterling to repay the cost of the expedition, and the money was to be raised by the sale of the property of the nobles and the clergy. Preparations were being pressed forward to receive them. Emissaries were engaged at a guinea a day to debauch the soldiers, of whom the Committee supposed that they had gained a third. 'Almost all the lower priests were bought over, and were ordered at confession to urge the people to stand by the cause of their country.' Abercrombie's order 'had been happily calculated to alienate the soldiers from the Government, when they saw their exertions in repressing the people made a pretext for abusing them.' The success of the revolution was to be

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<sup>1</sup> Information enclosed by Camden in his letter of April 2.

followed by a wholesale confiscation of estates. Full accounts had been drawn of the lands and their owners, and lists made of those who were to be sacrificed. 'The most dangerous man in Ireland was Emmett, from his zeal, his manners, his address, his eloquence, his ability, and his bloodthirstiness.'<sup>1</sup>

These accounts tallied too exactly with what was known already for any doubts to be entertained of the truth of them. The Viceroy and Council were sitting over a loaded mine, and for all that they could tell the match might be already smouldering which would explode it. Abercrombie had done irreparable mischief. The Viceroy believed himself entitled to hope that he was now exerting himself in earnest, and might not even yet be too late.

Some influence was unhappily at work on Abercrombie behind the scenes, which had enchanted him once more in the same fatal irresolution. He went South, but instead of disarming the people he contented himself with issuing orders that the arms were to be brought in and delivered up within ten days. After wasting a fortnight in inactivity, when time was of all things most precious, he returned to Dublin, to tell the Viceroy that although no pikes or muskets had yet been surrendered, he was convinced that they would be surrendered. His unwillingness to employ the soldiers had returned.

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<sup>1</sup> Informations, April 2.



'His report to me,' Camden said, in sending an account to Portland of his extraordinary conduct, 'was intermixed with observations on the impolicy of allowing the military to act without waiting for the civil magistrate, and of his opinion of the advantage of resorting to the civil power, with which political remarks it is unnecessary that I should trouble you.'<sup>1</sup>

Camden could no longer have desired to retain a Commander-in-Chief on whom he could rely so little as on General Abercrombie. He did, however, once more, though to no purpose, invite him to remain. When he refused he was pressed no further; and after having enormously aggravated every element of danger in the country, he left Ireland, and the command devolved on General Lake.

'Sir Ralph's delay and long notice has done nothing but mischief,' Camden wrote, as soon as he was gone. 'It has cooled the ardour of the well-affected country gentlemen. No arms have been brought in, and now the general officers in command are themselves hesitating. At the assizes in Kildare the juries in general did their duty, but there appeared no good disposition among the Catholics, and the juries which did not act with propriety were of that persuasion. The appearance is of the contest becoming a religious one. All means shall be used to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, April 20.' S.P.O.

avert this danger, but the alarms of the Protestants are so great, and the hopes of the Catholics are so strong, that it is difficult to repress the violence of the first or make any impression on the latter.' <sup>1</sup>

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'Camden to Portland, April 23.' S.P.O.

## SECTION V.

STUDENTS of later Irish history are familiar with the ferocious cruelties inflicted by General Lake's <sup>1798</sup> army on the Irish peasantry in the spring of 1798, the free quarters, the burnt villages, the pitch-caps, the triangle, and the lash. To these outrages it has pleased the Irish to attribute the insurrection. England, ever stern in extremities, ever penitent when the danger is over, and inclined to shift the blame upon her instruments, has allowed this legend, like so many others, to pass unrefuted, and has permitted one more illusion to swell the volume of Ireland's imaginary wrongs. An attention to dates would have sufficed to reduce the charge to modest dimensions. Lake did not take the command-in-chief till the 23rd of April. On the 24th of May the rebellion burst. The atrocities which are supposed to have caused it were therefore limited to a single month. The preceding history has been written in vain if it be now necessary to insist that the disarming of the South was no measure of gratuitous severity. For seven years the whole of Ireland had been deliberately preparing for revolt. An invisible authority ruled over the four provinces, with a code of laws enforced by dagger, pike, pistol, and houghing-knife. It had formed an army, negotiated an alliance, and conspired to bring to its assistance the deadliest enemies of England. Its regiments were

dispersed over the whole country, ready at any moment for action, yet imperceptible to the outward eye. The officers were younger brothers, professional men, adventurers, more or less educated, claiming the status of gentlemen, some of them men of fortune, and even of noble family. The rank-and-file were persons pursuing externally their quiet callings as tradesmen, artisans, clerks, farmers, or labourers. They had concealed depôts of arms ready to be snatched at a moment's notice, whether the object was to murder a magistrate or to take the field against the army of the Sovereign. The long forbearance of the Government had shaken the confidence of the troops and of the respectable inhabitants, who believed themselves deserted. Subtle influences were at work poisoning the loyalty of the soldiers. Things had come to such a point that there was scarce a country-house in any corner of Ireland where a Protestant family could go to rest without a sense that before morning they might be awakened by the yells of assassins. The servants who waited on them at table, the labourers who worked in their fields or gardens, might, for all they could tell, be in secret league for their destruction. Well-disposed at heart they might be, but their wills were under the spell of the general terror; and any magistrate whose loyalty was conspicuous knew that he was doing his duty to his country at the risk of his own and children's lives. The Irish gentry were looking upon themselves as doomed. The English press was ringing with execrations against them. They saw peers and statesmen

going into the witness-box, to claim identity of opinion with Satanides O'Connor. The responsible governor of Ireland would have shown a craven shrinking from the first elements of his obligations if at such a moment he had allowed an impression to go abroad that he dared not grapple with the deadly organisation which was thus openly setting law at defiance. The ten days weakly granted by Abercrombie were allowed to expire, and then, as not a pike had been surrendered, General Lake set about his work. He had to deal with a temper of which the natural stubbornness was encouraged by the impression that the Castle Government would not be supported by the power of England. Of British troops he had but a handful. The force on which he had to rely to carry out his orders consisted mainly of the loyal Irish Yeomanry, men whose friends had been murdered, who had themselves been marked for murder, whose hands had for years been tied by a law which gave them no protection, while to their enemies it was a convenient shield. There was little cause of surprise if now at last, when they were permitted to show a people who had laughed at courts of justice that there were other modes by which they could be compelled into obedience, the poison-fangs were not drawn with the gentlest hand. It is true that during three weeks regiments were sent to live at free quarters in districts where the inhabitants combined to resist the disarmament. It is true that when other means failed the lash was freely used to compel disclosures, though only where sure and certain infor-

mation had led the officers to know that there was something to be disclosed. It is true, also, that the lash proved the most efficacious of persuasives, that under its pressure the labours of the Revolutionary Committee were rendered futile, that the army of insurrection was deprived of half its means of injury, that the rebellion when it broke out was confined to districts where the process had been imperfectly carried out, and that General Lake's determination, though it could not prevent infinite horrors, did at least prevent a massacre on the scale of the precedent of 1641.

In so rude a scene there were doubtless instances of unnecessary harshness. Passionate indignation had been roused by the long catalogue of unpunished crimes, and passionate indignation is seldom temperate, and sometimes cruel.

The United Irishmen had affected the fashion of short hair. The loyalists called them Croppies, and if a Croppy prisoner stood silent when it was certain that he could confess with effect, a paper or linen cap smeared with pitch was forced upon his head to bring him to his senses. Such things ought not to have been, and such things would not have been had General Lake been supplied with English troops; but assassins and their accomplices will not always be delicately handled by those whose lives they have threatened. Occasionally, not often, men suffered who were innocent, so far as no definite guilt could be proved against them. At such times, however, those who are not

actively loyal lie in the border-land of just suspicion. Jurymen who would not convict on clear evidence, peasants who had looked on upon murder, yet in court found their memory fail them, those who knew of intended outrages yet spoke no word of warning, were not innocent. Society demands the active help of all its members to prevent or discover crimes, and men who leave these duties unfulfilled are confounded naturally with the actively guilty, when society thus treated falls in pieces and military severity is compulsorily substituted for law.

Among the gentlemen whom history has been pleased to gibbet for his share in these transactions was Mr. Thomas Judkin Fitzgerald, the High Sheriff of Tipperary. It was in Tipperary, the old home of the Whiteboys, that the intending insurgents had shown their colours with the most daring effrontery. When Abercrombie was seen to be hesitating, a town in Tipperary was occupied and plundered of arms in open day by a thousand rebel horse. In another town there a regiment of Yeomanry had been surrounded, and had narrowly escaped destruction. No slight courage was required to disarm Tipperary, nor was the disarming an easy matter when there was courage to undertake it. The High Sheriff was a Uniacke by birth. His father took the name of Fitzgerald. He is likely, therefore, to have been a relation of Mr. Uniacke, who had just been assassinated, with his wife and Colonel St. George. This gentleman did, by decisive measures, effectually break the

insurgent organisation in Tipperary, so that when the rebellion came the most dangerous county in Ireland lay motionless. They were not gentle measures. He used the whip freely, and he made one mistake which was not forgotten. A man named Wright, at Clonmel, was suspected of connection with the United Irishmen. The suspicion in all likelihood was well-founded. On searching him a letter was found in his pocket, in French. Fitzgerald did not understand the language, but his mind, like that of every one else, was full of the expected French invasion. The letter, though utterly innocent, was treated as an evidence of guilt, and Wright was severely flogged. He prosecuted the High Sheriff afterwards, and recovered 500*l.* as damages. Fitzgerald has been rewarded with a black name in Irish legend, and with the scorn of foolish historians. He was rewarded, also, by the knowledge that by his general nerve and bravery he had probably saved at least ten thousand lives; and the English Government, though generally too proud to remember good service in Ireland, yet so far acknowledged Fitzgerald's merit that they paid his fine and created him a baronet.

Had Abercrombie acted at once when first required by Camden to set the troops in motion, there would have been time to have made the disarmament complete, and Irish history would have been unstained by the bloody scenes which will have immediately to be described. Lake, however, had but a month. He succeeded in crippling the rebellion. He could not



prevent it. His progress was attended, of course, by renewed outcries from the English Opposition and by yells from the incendiary press of Ireland. Grattan accused the Ministers of sounding the horrid trumpet of carnage and desolation, of encouraging the army to murder the Irish; of being in league with the Orange boys, and at war with the people. It might have been happier for Ireland and for England also if Camden had taken Portland's advice, and frankly adopted the Orange boys. He had himself confessed that of all subjects of the Crown they were the most to be relied upon. He stopped short of the measure which would have given him the absolute command of the insurrection. Within the limits which he had prescribed to himself he went on his way undiverted by clamour. By the 3rd of May he was able to report that large quantities of arms had been given up, and an evident impression made on 'the deluded wretches' who had infected the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> A week later he could say that there was a cessation of murders. Before the proclamation of the 30th of March 'not a mail had arrived without accounts of savage cruelties or extensive pillage;' 'now he had the satisfaction to think that at least the lives of the loyal and well-disposed had been protected.'

'But there is still,' he added, 'much to be done. There are great combinations to break. General

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, May 3.

Dundas has made much impression in Kildare, where the treason was more organised than elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> After the first measures of severity were adopted there was an appearance of contrition; but messages came from Dublin advising them to hold out ten days, when they should have help. Great numbers of arms, however, have been delivered up. In Queen's County and Tipperary there is great improvement. Wicklow is very extensively and very formidably organised. The mountains are depôts of arms and ammunition. The active and severe measures pursued in the country have driven many persons into Dublin. The fear of detection, the delay in the arrival of the French, together with the ill-disposition of those who have been obliged to fly the country, many imagine will induce the rebels to attempt an insurrection in the city. Orders have gone round to the people to be ready.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Owing, as Lord Cornwallis afterwards admitted, 'to the fostering hand of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and the countenance which it received from his weak brother of *Leinster*.'—'Cornwallis to General Ross, July 13.'—*Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> 'Camden to Portland, May 11.' S.P.O.

## SECTION VI.

THE revolutionary chiefs understood the temper of their countrymen. They knew that whenever  
 1798 authority asserted itself the disposition of the Irish people was to submit. The arms so carefully collected, were being swept away. Confidence was failing. If they waited longer, their boast that they could bring into the field hundreds of thousands of men might turn to scandalous nothingness. Lord Edward Fitzgerald had never left Dublin. Neilson, Tone's friend, one of those who had registered the vow on McArt's Hill, was in Dublin also. The vacant places on the Committee had been filled with other daring and desperate men; among them were two young barristers, named John and Henry Sheares, sons of a merchant at Cork, who had been at Paris in the early days of the Revolution, and had been infected with the prevailing enthusiasm. They resolved to act, and to act at once, and Edward Fitzgerald designed a plan.

The Government was watching their movements. Another informer had now tendered his services—a Captain Armstrong, an officer in a militia regiment quartered outside the capital at Lehaunstown. Captain Armstrong happened one day to enter a bookseller's shop in Grafton Street. The bookseller, whose name was Byrne, led by Armstrong's loose talk to suppose

he was on the insurgent side, told him that something of consequence was immediately to be done, and offered to introduce him to two of the leaders. Armstrong consulted his Colonel, who ordered him to affect sympathy, accept the introduction, and learn what he could. On the 10th of May, the day preceding the date of Camden's last letter, Armstrong met John Sheares and his brother in the back room behind Byrne's shop, and the reason immediately appeared for their anxiety to secure his help. They told him that Dublin was about to rise. Dublin Castle, the camp at Lehaunstown, and the artillery barracks were to be simultaneously surprised. Many men in Armstrong's company were prepared to desert to the insurgents. He was entreated to use his influence with the Catholic non-commissioned officers to spread the spirit, and was told that if he could bring over the regiment he would be called the saviour of his country.<sup>1</sup>

With the help of Armstrong the Castle was exactly informed, and the conspirators were suddenly astonished by the announcement that Dublin, like the provinces, was to be disarmed, and by an offer of a thousand pounds reward for the discovery of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Major Swan, who had arrested the Committee, with Major Sirr and Captain Ryan, instituted an instant search for pikes and muskets. Five cannon were taken in a brewer's yard in King Street, four others at a house in Townshend

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<sup>1</sup> 'Trial of Henry and John Sheares.'—*State Trials*, vol. 27.

Street. Stores of arms of all kinds were found concealed about the Custom-house Quay. A blacksmith and his journeyman were caught forging pikes. The journeyman, threatened with the whip, told where pikes already made had been hidden, and many cartloads were thus seized. Still Dublin was too well provided to be easily stripped of its means of mischief. These measures only determined the conspirators to be prompt in their work, and the order went out for all Ireland to be ready to rise at an early day.

For many reasons the Government was anxious to discover and secure Lord Edward. A Fitzgerald in the field would be a rallying cry to the insurrection of which more than one Viceroy of Ireland had felt the power. Reynolds, whose treachery was unsuspected, was still admitted to the secrets of the confederacy, and was satisfied that Fitzgerald had never left the city. Fitzgerald, he knew, had been anxious to see Talleyrand. He wanted the French to send two or three frigates to the Wexford coast, which could be done on the instant, merely as an encouragement; and Lady Edward, who was now in Dublin, told Reynolds that her husband had slipped away to Paris to hasten matters.<sup>1</sup> Reynolds, however, did not believe this. On the 18th of May Major Sirr received communications from a quarter unhinted at in the most secret letters of the Viceroy, telling him where Lord Edward would be found; and on

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<sup>1</sup> Information of Thomas Reynolds, May 11.

Saturday, the 19th, between five and six in the evening, Swan, Sirr, and Ryan, with eight soldiers in plain clothes, went quietly and without attracting attention to the house of a featherman in Thomas Street, named Murphy. As they approached the door a woman, who had observed them, was seen to rush in and up the stairs, to give the alarm. Major Swan was too quick for her, and running close behind her, entered a room at the stair-head, when he discovered Lord Edward lying on a bed, in a dressing-jacket. It was still full daylight. Major Swan told him quietly that he had a warrant for his arrest; resistance would be useless, but he would be treated with the respect due to his rank. Lord Edward cared nothing for his rank. He had abjured his title six years before in Paris, and in Dublin among the initiated he was called Citizen Fitzgerald. But below his citizenship ran the fierce wild blood of the Geraldines. Springing from the bed, he levelled a pistol at Major Swan's head. The pistol missed fire, and he leapt on him with a dagger, and stabbed him through and through. It was the work of a moment. Captain Ryan had followed at his best speed, and when he came in he found Swan bleeding on the ground, and Lord Edward striking at him. Ryan, too, snapped a pistol. The flint-lock failed him. He had a sword-cane, and made a lunge with the blade, which bent on Lord Edward's side, and forced him back upon the bed. In an instant he was up again. Ryan closed with him. Lord Edward, naturally a powerful man,

and now with the added strength of rage and despair, hurled him to the ground, rolled upon him, plunged his dagger into him again and again with such fury that in a few seconds he had given him fourteen wounds.

He then sprang to his feet and attempted flight. Major Sirr, now entering, met Lord Edward struggling towards the door, endeavouring to extricate himself from the grasp of the two officers, who, though lying on the floor, with the blood streaming from them, still clung to his legs.

Major Sirr's pistols were in better condition than his comrade's. He fired. Lord Edward fell, struck heavily in the shoulder, and surrendered. A guard of cavalry was sent for, and he was conveyed to Newgate through a silent, sullen crowd. Major Swan recovered. Captain Ryan died of his wounds in a few days.

In Lord Edward's room were found a green uniform and the official seal of the Irish Union. In a pocket-book was the sketch of the plan for the surprise of Dublin, in which he was himself to have taken the command. The wound was thought at first not to be dangerous. It proved otherwise. Violent spasms came on, attended with delirium. At the end of a fortnight he too died, to the confessed relief of the Government, who were spared the necessity of bringing him to trial.<sup>1</sup> 'Alas!' said Tone, when he heard of the capture

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Edward died at two o'clock this morning. I know not whether to consider this event a very unfortunate one. The state

' Lord Edward Fitzgerald is taken. I knew him little, but I honour and venerate his character. He is not the first Fitzgerald sacrificed to his country. There is a wonderful likeness between him and Lord Thomas, who lost his head on Tower Hill for an attempt to recover Irish independence.'<sup>1</sup> Individuals are known by their friends, nations by their traditionary idols. Silken Thomas, who murdered an Archbishop of Dublin with his own hand; Lord Edward, who for a dream of ambition would have drowned his country in blood, and when caught in his lair fought with the ferocity of a wild beast, are surrounded in the Irish imagination with the aureoles of heroes; while England in an indolent dream of conciliating Ireland by humouring her illusions, acquiesces in the amazing verdict.

On Lord Edward's capture the Committee felt that they must give the signal instantly, or that their organisation would dissolve. The day after, Sunday, John Sheares told Armstrong that 'their friends in the country would hold out no longer unless Dublin supported them.' The Executive Committee would meet on the following morning to settle the last details. The general plan, however, had been already arranged. The time appointed was to be the night of Wednesday, the 23rd of May. Five or six determined men had been told off to take charge of each of the Privy

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of his health must have postponed his trial, and prolonged the ex-

citement.—'Camden to Portland, June 4.' S.P.O.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, June 1798.



Councillors, and kill or capture them in their houses. Especially they were to make sure of Lord Clare, the peculiar object of the Committee's fear and hatred. Strong bodies of men were then to occupy the quays. The Castle was to be attacked in front and rear. The country for fourteen miles round the city had received its orders, and would surprise the camps. The mails were to be stopped after leaving the city, and their non-appearance had been agreed on as the general signal for the rise of the whole island. A further scheme had been formed by Neilson, the character and purpose of which is unknown, but it was something too atrocious even for John Sheares, who recoiled with horror from it, and threatened to denounce Neilson to the Government unless it was abandoned.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'I am acquainted with the destructive design you meditate, and I am resolved to counteract it, whatever it may cost me. Your scheme I view with horror, whether its effects be considered as relating to my imprisoned friends, the destruction of whose property and lives must be the consequence even of your success, or as affecting Arthur O'Connor's existence, the precarious chance for which you thus cruelly lessen; or (which is superior to every other consideration) as ensuring the ruin of Ireland's freedom. In short, to be candid with you, the scheme is so totally destitute of any apology, even from the plea of folly

and passion, that I cannot avoid attributing its origin to a worse cause. My resolution, and that of my friends, is this:—If you do not, by nine o'clock this evening, give us every necessary and sacred assurance that you will counteract and prevent the perpetration of this plot against all that you ought to hold dear, notice shall be given to the Government without a moment's delay. We prefer that a few misguided, not to say guilty, individuals should perish, than that every remaining hope of our country's success, and the lives of our most valued friends, should be sacrificed by the accomplishment of a stupid, perhaps wicked

The resolution of the Committee was carried by Armstrong to the Castle, and two days before the blow was to have been struck in Dublin the second set of leaders were seized, like their predecessors. On Monday, the 21st of May, at eight in the morning, Alderman Alexander was at the door of the Sheares's house, in Baggot Street; an entrance was forced, and the brothers were arrested. In a writing-case on the library-table was found the draft of an address in the handwriting of John Sheares, prepared for issue on the news that the Castle had been taken, and the Viceroy and the Privy Council either dead or captured. This paper, written as it was by a person capable of strong indignation at acts which overstepped the margin of permitted violence, is a curious evidence how extravagantly the minds of men otherwise honourable can be unhinged or perverted by patriotic delirium:

'Irishmen! your country is free, and you are about to be avenged. That vile Government which has so long and so cruelly oppressed you is no more. Some of its most atrocious monsters have already paid the forfeit of their lives<sup>1</sup> and the rest are in our hands, waiting their fate. The national flag—the sacred green—is at this moment flying over the ruins of despotism, and that

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undertaking. — John Sheares.'  
 'The letter was found on Neilson's person at the time of his arrest, May 23, 1798.'—*Musgrave*, Appendix 13.

<sup>1</sup> Showing evidently that the order had been to kill rather than make prisoners of the most obnoxious of the Council.

capital which a few hours since witnessed the debauchery, plots, and crimes of your tyrants is now the citadel of triumphant patriotism and virtue. Arise, then, united sons of Ireland! Arise, like a great and powerful people, determined to be free or die! Arm yourselves by every means in your power, and rush like lions on your foes. Consider that for every enemy you disarm you arm a friend, and thus become doubly powerful. In the cause of liberty, inaction is cowardice, and the coward shall forfeit the property he has not the courage to protect. Let his arms be seized, and transferred to the gallant spirits who want and will use them. We swear to punish robbery with death and infamy. We swear we will never sheathe the sword till every being in the country is restored to those equal rights which the God of Nature has given to all men. As for those degenerate wretches who turn their swords against their native country,<sup>1</sup> the national vengeance awaits them. *Let them find no quarter*, unless they prove their repentance by speedily deserting, and exchanging the standard of slavery for that of freedom, under which they may share the glory and advantage which are due to the patriot bands of Ireland. Many of the military feel the love of liberty glow in their breasts, and have joined the national standard. Receive with open arms such as follow so

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<sup>1</sup> Grattan, who had joined a Yeomanry corps, retired when he saw what was approaching, declaring that, come what might, he would never fight against his country.

glorious an example. . . . Rouse all the energies of your souls. Heed not the glare of a hired soldiery or aristocratic Yeomanry. They cannot stand the vigorous shock of freedom. Their trappings and their arms will soon be yours, and the detested Government of England, to which we vow eternal hatred, shall learn that the treasure it expends on its accoutred slaves, for the purpose of butchering Irishmen, shall but further enable us to turn their swords on its devoted head. Attack them in every direction, day and night. Avail yourselves of the natural advantages of your country, which are innumerable, and with which you are better acquainted than they. War, war, alone, must occupy every mind and every hand in Ireland. Vengeance, Irishmen! Vengeance on your oppressors! Remember what thousands of your dearest friends have perished by their merciless orders. Remember their burnings, their rackings, their torturings, their military massacres, and their legal murders! Remember Orr!

Of the many gifts which nature has bestowed on Irishmen the fatallest is, perhaps, the fluency of speech, the fertility in florid diction, which at once exhausts the energy that in robust nations takes the form of action, and makes them the victims of their own illusions, by clothing their emotions and fancies in the shining dress of rhetoric. Ideas so brilliantly expressed seem too beautiful to be unsound or untrue. It is only when brought in collision with fact that the unsubstantial pageant fades, and leaves its dupes to

add their disappointment to the long catalogue of their wrongs.

Were it not for the enormous crimes which these infatuated men confessed that they were deliberately contemplating, the spectacle of Ireland on the eve of the rebellion of 1798 would rise into tragic piteousness. The long era of misgovernment had ripened at last for the harvest. Rarely since the inhabitants of the earth have formed themselves into civilised communities had any country suffered from such a complication of neglect and ill-usage. The Irish people clamoured against Government, and their real wrong, from first to last, had been that there was no government over them; that, under changing forms, the universal rule among them for four centuries had been the tyranny of the strong over the weak; that from the catalogue of virtues demanded of those who exercised authority over their fellow-men the word Justice had been blotted out. Anarchy had borne its fruits. The victims of scandalous misadministration had risen at last to demand redress; but they had risen in blind rage in pursuit of objects which, if obtained, could but plunge them deeper in their misery. They had appealed to England, and England had for bread given them a stone, for a fish a serpent. Instead of practical justice she had given them political liberty, and when political liberty had proved a mocking phantom they had gone mad and had started to arms, and were preparing for universal massacre and ruin.

Their leaders disguised the hideousness of their

schemes in patriotic rhapsodies. They compared themselves in fancy to the liberators of America or to the heroes of Jacobin France. They believed, or dreamt that they believed, that they were to enrich the annals of mankind by the achievement of a glorious revolution. Their road to it hitherto had lain through midnight murder, through seduction of honest men from their duty, through the contemplation of crimes so horrible that they shrunk appalled from the ferocity of each other's conceptions. Though engaged, as they supposed, in the most glorious of causes, they had been unable to inspire one another with the fidelity which the pickpocket displays to his comrades. In every Committee there were traitors, one or many. They had generated round them an atmosphere of villany, and when they lifted their hands at last to strike the blow which was to break the chains of Ireland they found themselves in the hands of the police, fallen from the high peaks to which they were in imagination soaring, to the level of common felons.

Two nights after the arrest of John and Henry Sheares, the keeper of Newgate saw a man, muffled in a cloak, reconnoitring the prison. He sprung upon him and seized him, and found that he had taken Neilson.

Why, it may be asked again, had the Government, with the threads of the conspiracy so long in its hands, allowed it to go forward? 'They had permitted and encouraged the progress of the rebellion,'

says modern Irish opinion, 'in order that the suppression of it might be effected with more *éclat* and terror.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord Camden's letters form a conclusive answer to the charge of encouragement. It is scarcely less unjust to charge him with having looked on passively, since the arrests which he ventured, and his efforts to disarm the disturbed counties, were received with a tempest of denunciation from the friends of liberty in both islands; and his attempts to prevent the rebellion were described as the gratuitous provocation of an innocent well-disposed people. He did what he could. That he did not do more was the consequence of his situation. The common law of England was not calculated for the Irish meridian. The existence of a country where juries would not convict, where witnesses were afraid to give evidence and magistrates to commit, where laws had no terror, because the general sentiment combined to shield a criminal, had not been allowed for when the Constitution was framed which the connection with Great Britain extended to the Sister Island. Until acts had been perpetrated which no art could conceal or palliate, until the ordinary laws were suspended by open and undisguised rebellion, the Government did but expose itself by interference to defeat in the courts of justice and to reproach for unjust prosecutions, and thus sate spell-bound, while the catastrophe was

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<sup>1</sup> *Plowden.*

approaching, surrounded by a ring of traitors whom only at the last extremity it was able to touch.

The Executive Committee were finally disabled by the loss of Lord Edward, the two Sheares's, and Neilson. On them, after the arrest of the 12th of March, the general direction had devolved, and the rebel bodies in the capital and the provinces were left to their local chiefs. The last act of the central authority had been to fix the day for the game to begin. The match had been lighted, and the explosion was certain. How serious it might now be, the result only could show. Dublin at least was secured.

'If there is a rising in the city,' Lord Camden wrote on the 21st, 'the insurgents will be annihilated.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Portland, May 21.' S.P.O



## BOOK X.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE REBELLION.

##### SECTION I.

**T**HE conspiracy of the United Irishmen had departed almost wholly from its original character before it assumed the shape of a rebellion. The first lodges had been formed to spread the principles of the French Revolution. The founders of the society were believers in what is now called the religion of humanity. The belief in God they regarded as a worn-out and vanishing superstition, and their dream had been of uniting Catholics and Protestants, to establish a Republic, in which the petty quarrels of the Christian sects would disappear in the light of a more sublime philosophy.

The opinions of Tone and MacNeven were alien to the Irish character, and could never gain permanent influence over it.

The Catholic of the South and the Presbyterian of the North have this in common—that each believes firmly, and even passionately, in the form of Chris-

tianity which he professes. The alliance so ardently aimed at proved incapable of realisation. The country population of Ulster became, year after year, more and more Orange, the party of insurrection more and more Catholic. The Protestant politicians of Dublin and the Northern towns adhered to the cause with as much sincerity as they were capable of feeling. But the Irish politician is made of weak material. Belfast was disarmed; Dublin was overawed. The Protestant leaders were in Newgate. The Catholics remained alone in the field. But the Catholics were four-fifths of the population, and they were sworn into the confederacy nearly to a man. The patriots of the Parliament had stirred them out of their desponding sleep. Pitt had forced the franchise upon them, that they might help him against the revolution. Powers were immediately after placed almost within their grasp which would have made them masters of Ireland, and enabled them, without striking a blow, to undo the Reformation and overthrow the Protestant settlement.

The hand had been withdrawn. Protestant ascendancy was again upon their necks. But the fierce Irish spirit, which had lain asleep since Aghrim, was awake; and, whatever became of his republican Protestant allies, the Catholic Celt intended to try conclusions with sword and pike before he would consent to sink down once more into his bondage.

The Irish are the most unchanging people on the globe. The phenomena of 1641 were repeating them-

selves. In 1641 Puritans and Catholics had combined to demand political concessions. In 1641 they found themselves ill-yoked and ill-mated, and the unnatural coalition was dissolved. The plot for the rising of Sir Phelim O'Neil was identical, even in minute particulars, with Lord Edward's plan for 1798. In the latter, as in the former, the rising was to be simultaneous throughout the island. Dublin Castle was to be surprised; the Privy Council were to be killed or captured. In both instances the intention of massacre was disavowed, but in both it was rendered inevitable by reports ingeniously spread that the Protestants meditated the destruction of the Catholics. In both there was a settled purpose of eliminating the Protestants out of the country. In both was evidenced the infernal element which lies concealed in the Irish nature, and the vindictive ferocity to which it will descend.

In this only there was a difference between the two periods, that in 1798 there was no surprise. Lord Clare understood Ireland too well to mistake the effect which the conciliation policy of Pitt must produce. He knew that it must end at last in demands which could not be conceded, and that rebellion was then certain. He had watched the conspiracy step by step. He was aware of the coming explosion, and all had been done that the circumstances would allow to limit the extent of its destructiveness. Numerically, and on paper, the troops in the island might have seemed sufficient. Of one kind or another the Government

had under its command nearly 40,000 men. But they were of doubtful quality. Of British regiments there were scarcely any, the Ancient Britons—a Welsh Fencible regiment under Sir Watkin Wynn—a Durham regiment, and a regiment or two of Scotch militia, being nearly the whole. The Irish militia, eighteen thousand strong, were all Catholics, and the utmost uncertainty was felt as to their probable conduct. The rest were Irish Yeomanry, most of them, though not all, well-disposed, but untrained as soldiers, and no better than armed volunteers. The Orangemen Lord Camden was still afraid to employ. But, taking the men as they were, his force disposable for service was not in proportion to the apparent numbers. A large part of the army was required in the North. Several thousand men were kept in and about Dublin. Quiet could only be secured in Belfast, Cork, Limerick, and Galway by garrisons of overpowering strength. The regiments who were employed by Lake in the disarmament were scattered in sections over Leinster and Munster, many miles apart. For better security, and to prevent combinations, the companies had been broken up. Each party consisted of a score or two of men from one regiment, as many from another, and perhaps as many more dragoons. They were more like divisions of police than parts of an army; and being thus split in handfuls, with some seditious elements less or greater in every detachment, they were dangerously liable to be overwhelmed. United Irelanders had enlisted in the Yeomanry with the

purpose of betraying them. To surprise these parties separately, by simultaneous attacks in overpowering force, and destroy them before they could re-combine, was the rebel plan for the opening of the campaign. The Irish are credited for passionate impetuosity of temperament. Nothing is more remarkable in the present instance than the cool, deliberate treachery of their proceedings. The neighbourhood of Dublin was relied on to prevent any of the troops in the environs from going to the assistance of their comrades in the city. An illustration of their position may be seen in an account of the garrison at Rathcool, a town ten miles distant, on the south-western road. Captain Ormsby had been stationed there with twenty loyal Armagh militia. Mr. Clinch, a Catholic gentleman in the district, in apparent loyalty had raised a company of local infantry to support him. These men were all traitors. Their intention was to destroy Ormsby and his Protestants on the appointed day, and then march into Dublin, with Clinch at their head. The Catholic corps attended their own chapels. To throw Ormsby the more off his guard, the Rathcool priest addressed them on the 20th of May, the Sunday after Lord Edward's arrest, in two eminently loyal sermons, in Ormsby's presence, although he discovered afterwards that this priest had been the instigator of the plot.

Notice happily had been sent to all the officers in the environs of Dublin to be on the alert. A secret friend told Ormsby what was prepared for him. The

corps was paraded and disarmed. Clinch and the priest were sent to Dublin, where the former was a few days later tried and hanged; the latter was transported to Botany Bay.<sup>1</sup> As at Rathcool so everywhere, such of the troops as were known to be loyal were marked for destruction; but the warning placed them on the alert; and the people finding the surprise fail, waited for the issue of the expected rising in Dublin. Would Dublin venture to rise?—that was the question. On the night of the 23rd <sup>May.</sup> patrols went round the country within a radius of twelve miles to gather arms and warn the people to stay at home. The week preceding, Sir Richard Musgrave had watched the beacon-fires night after night on the distant hill-sides from his window in the city. That evening the patrols found in the cabins none but women, children, and old men. Every man who could shoulder a pike was off to the rendezvous. In Dublin itself strong bodies of troops were posted along the river and on the bridges. At daybreak notices were seen upon the walls from General Lake informing the people that they must keep within doors from nightfall to sunrise. By the side of the order of the Commander-in-Chief was an order from Mr. Fleming, the Lord Mayor,<sup>2</sup> to every individual to surrender his arms, and to every householder to hang a list upon

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<sup>1</sup> Musgrave's *History of the Irish Rebellion.*

<sup>2</sup> Fleming was among those who were marked for murder. His

servant had drawn the balls from his pistols, and was to have admitted the assassins.

his door of the persons residing under his roof, under penalty of being sent to the fleet for disobedience. Dublin, in the face of these precautions, preferred to be prudent. Dusky bodies of armed men, several thousands strong, assembled at various points outside the walls on either side of the river, waiting to hear that their friends were up, and that their aid was needed. At noon, when no signal was given, they melted sullenly away. A gathering at Rathfarnham was dispersed by Lord Roden's dragoons. On the north, at Dunboyne and Dunshaughlin the genuine spirit showed itself. At Dunshaughlin the Protestant clergyman and his family were murdered. At Dunboyne a Protestant revenue officer and three Protestant policemen were murdered. At Ratoath and Westfieldstown small parties of soldiers were surprised successfully and cut in pieces. About Swords Protestant houses were set on fire. But for the most part within reach of Lake's garrison the insurrection missed fire. Martial law had been proclaimed; those who were caught in breach of the law were carried before courts, where justice was dealt out summarily and surely, and for some days in conspicuous portions of the city dead bodies swinging from crossbeams were preaching to the patriot incendiaries the meaning of armed rebellion.

In the outer circle, at a longer radius from the metropolis, where the detachments were more thinly scattered, events assumed a darker aspect. General Lake had been able to carry out the disarmament only

where he had received the active support of the country gentlemen. The hostility of the Fitzgeralds to the Government, the open treason of one member of the family, and the refusal of its head to co-operate in enforcing order, had reinforced the disaffection of the county of Kildare with the elements of feudal allegiance, which ought to have been on the side of the Crown. The inhabitants had not only been left in possession of their pikes, but they were led to believe that their natural chief was with them, and that the cause of the rebellion was the cause of the Duke of Leinster.

On the eastern side of the country, where it approaches or touches the county of Dublin, were three towns within a few miles of each other. Naas, once a frontier garrison of the Pale, was now a thriving borough on the Great Waterford Road. North of Naas, on the Grand Canal, was Clane, or Cluain, little more than a village, which had grown up as an appendage to a Franciscan abbey; and two miles from Clane was a place called Prosperous, the name indicating that it had once been a scene of enterprise and industry. The opening of the canal and the abolition of the restrictions on trade had restored life to it. A Mr. Brewer, an enterprising Englishman, had established a large manufactory there, and was finding employment and comfort for a growing population. As commanding the canal and the roads, these towns were important military stations. Lord Gosford held Naas, with a garrison of 200 men. Captain Griffiths



was at Clane, with a corps of local Yeomanry and a party of Armagh Militia. Captain Swayne was at Prosperous, with a detachment of the North Cork Militia and twenty-three of Wynn's Ancient Britons—dragoons. Among the officers of the Clane Yeomanry was Doctor Esmonde, a gentleman of old Catholic family, brother of Sir Thomas Esmonde of Wexford, who had affected loyalty, like Mr. Clinch at Rathcool, for the better service of his country and her cause. He had seduced the majority of his corps. He was in accurate correspondence with the insurgent leaders in the neighbourhood. It was arranged that on the preconcerted signal, the non-arrival of the mail from Dublin on the night of the 23rd of May, Naas, Clane, and Prosperous were to be attacked at the same moment. Esmonde and the disaffected Yeomen were to assist, and the officers and the loyal part of the soldiers were to be destroyed. Surprise was an essential part of the scheme. At the two latter places many of the soldiers were billeted in private houses. If off their guard they might be found divided, and could then be dealt with easily. Swayne had been directed to collect the arms of the people at Prosperous. On Sunday, the 20th, he took his North Cork men to the Catholic chapel. Father Higgins, the priest, like his brother at Rathcool, addressed his congregation on the duty of submission to the authorities, and Dr. Esmonde, who had ridden over from Clane in the morning to support his brother officer, spoke to them as a Catholic in the same tone

A number of peasants, in apparent obedience, surrendered their pikes. In the priest's presence they expressed regret for having been betrayed into the conspiracy, and promised to have no more to do with it.

To avoid recognition by his comrades, Esmonde undertook the attack at Prosperous, leaving his own captain half-deserted to be destroyed by others.

On the afternoon of the 23rd, when the hour was <sup>May</sup> 1798 drawing near, he paid Swayne another visit, and dined with him at the hotel in the town. Father Higgins was again present, and he and Esmonde told Swayne that the people were really penitent. Very many of them wished to give up their arms, but they dared not bring them during daylight. They would bring them at night and lay them down in the street, but they were afraid of the sentinels. Swayne, credulous and good-natured, suspected nothing. He ordered the sentinels, if they saw men moving in the street after dark, to take no notice of them.

The mails left Dublin that evening as usual. They were all stopped on the roads by the country people, according to the general instructions, and the call to arms went out. At two in the morning, when sleep was deepest, before the first streaks of dawn had begun to show, Esmonde, with his Clane Yeomen and an unknown multitude of ruffians, chiefly armed with pikes, came into Prosperous. The sentinels gave no alarm, and were killed, and then at once, before a note of warning had been raised, the rebel bands flung themselves with

a wild yell upon the barracks. The door went down. Swayne's room was on the ground-floor. They plunged in and stabbed him as he was springing from his bed. The soldiers, startled from their sleep, snatched their muskets and rushed out. The mob swung back into the street, barricaded the doors to keep them secure, and then flung fire into the cellars, which were filled with straw and faggots.<sup>1</sup> Beset before and behind, the miserable men were driven from the lower rooms up the stairs. As the flames pursued them they sprung out of the windows, the mob below catching them as they fell on their pikes, and as each victim writhed upon the point receiving him with a fierce 'Hurrah!' The North Cork were Irishmen and Catholics, traitors to both creed and country, deserving no mercy and finding none. All who were in the barracks were killed or desperately wounded.

The Ancient Britons were quartered in a private house. They, too, were hated almost equally, for they had made themselves notorious in the disarming of Ulster. Eight of the twenty-three leapt out of a back window, and escaped across the country in the darkness. The rest were killed. Their horses, arms, and uniforms were taken by the rebels.

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<sup>1</sup> The first account which reached Camden was, 'that Captain Swayne had been inhumanly butchered, and afterwards put on the fire and burnt to death.'—'To Portland, May 26.' S.P.O.

It is uncertain whether Swayne was killed or wounded in the first attack; but if he was burnt to death it was afterwards, in the conflagration of the barracks.

As the roof of the barracks fell in, men and women flung themselves weeping in each other's arms. Tears only could express their joy. 'Ireland is ours again!' they cried. 'Dublin is taken—Naas is taken—Ireland is ours!' 'Where are the heretics?' shrieked savage voices. 'Down with the heretics!' The depression of Irish manufactures had been the first article of Ireland's complaints. Manufactures had come back, finding work for the starving and food for the hungry, but the benefactor of Prosperous was an Englishman and a Protestant. The day was breaking. A shout rose, 'To Brewer's house!' A few moments later Mr. Brewer was lying in his shirt on the pavement with his skull cloven by an axe, the mob yelling over the body of 'the heretic tyrant.' The landlord's turn followed. Mr. Stamer, the owner of most of the town, was staying, unluckily for himself, with a lady at a house in the neighbourhood. The alarm had been given. The lady concealed her guest, and when the insurgents came to the door and demanded him, she said that he was gone. The watch had been too good. They knew that he was in the house. They could not find him, and they cried for fire to fetch him out. To save needless destruction, Mr. Stamer, like a brave man, came out of his hiding-place, and was instantly shot.

The work at Prosperous thus happily finished, it was time to see how their brothers had prospered at Clane, and to help them if Jephson was holding out. The rebel leaders dressed and mounted themselves as

Ancient Britons with the dead men's horses and uniforms, that they might be mistaken by the soldiers for friends.

At Clane there were no barracks. The troops were billeted about the place in twos and threes, and were thus more dangerously exposed than at Prosperous. The attack, however, had been delayed till dawn. Captain Griffiths, for some reason, was uneasy and awake. Looking from his window, he saw files of armed men coming in along the roads. He gave the alarm in time to enable the Armagh Militia to dress and snatch their muskets. The street was full as they came out, but they fought their way towards one another, formed into line, and charged. Having failed in their surprise, the rebels showed their usual inability to encounter disciplined men. Though fifty to one, they turned and ran out of the town. Outside they were joined by parties coming up from Prosperous. Cheered by the news which their friends brought, they formed again, and returned to the attack. They were received with a steady fire, which they were unable to face. Falling fast, they wavered and broke. Esmonde had carried with him all the Yeomanry but seventeen. These few charged and completed the rout, and the wretches masquerading as Ancient Britons were every one cut down. It was now six o'clock. Details had come in of the frightful disaster at Prosperous. Pursuit with so small a force was impossible. Griffiths recalled his men and reviewed his losses; and unable to account for the shortness of

numbers in the Yeomanry, ordered them to parade. Those who had been concerned in the night's work had come back expecting to find as complete a sweep of their comrades as they had made themselves of Swayne and the North Cork. Finding the day gone against them, they either dispersed or stole into their quarters unperceived. Esmonde, especially, contrived to reach his room, to wash, dress, and powder himself as a dog would do after a midnight orgie among the sheep, and presented himself in his place in the ranks as if he had never been absent.

There was no time for inquiry. A messenger galloped up at that moment with the news that Lord Gosport was beset at Naas and required instant help.

The men swallowed a hasty breakfast. Griffiths was in the saddle, prepared to start, when a note was slipped into his hand telling him that Esmonde had led the rebels at Prosperous. He thrust it into his pocket and said nothing till he reached Naas, when the treacherous gentleman was placed under arrest, sent to Dublin to be tried by court-martial, and promptly hanged.

At Naas it was found that the attack had failed, as at Clane, but not till after a sharper struggle. Gosport, more fortunate than Swayne or Griffiths, had received notice to be prepared on the evening preceding. The alarm was sounded at half-past two in the morning. The rebel columns were entering on four sides. They forced their way to the gaol, where

they were received with grape from some field-pieces and with a heavy musketry fire. They bore three volleys before they gave way. Thirty of them were found dead in the streets, and as many more in the fields and lanes outside. The troops in turn had suffered severely. The rebels had fought with dangerous courage, and their evidently enormous numbers created serious misgiving. For in fact they were everywhere. The same scenes had been going on throughout the country wherever there was a town or village held in the name of the Government, and outside the towns wherever Protestants were to be found. All day long terrified families were streaming into Naas. All day long the smoke of burning homesteads was seen rising from every point of the horizon. Kildare town had been considered secure, so many arms had been surrendered there without resistance. General Walford, who was in charge, had withdrawn on the 23rd to join General Dundas at Kilcullen.<sup>1</sup> He was no sooner gone than Kildare was occupied by 2,000 rebels, with crosses painted on their pikes. General Dundas, irresolute, and unequal to the sudden call upon him, was confounded by the swift outpouring of so many nests of hornets. They were here, they were there, they were on all sides. A few hundreds of them showed themselves near Kilcullen. He sent a party of Yeomen cavalry to ride

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<sup>1</sup> On the Cork road, where the bridge crosses the Liffey, seven miles south of Naas.

them down. They threw themselves into line; the Yeomen rode upon the pikes only for their horses to fall and themselves to be pierced as they rolled on the ground. Dundas fell back on Naas, taking the Judges with him, who were on their way to Clonmel Assizes. Kilcullen was left to its fate. The gentry and clergymen were deserted to shift for themselves. Their houses were burnt. Those who failed to escape were piked. The entire country was a scene of ruin, terror, and confusion.

The news of Dundas's retreat spread South. The same night several thousand insurgents gathered in Sir Edward Crosbie's park, outside Carlow, led by a farmer named Roach.<sup>1</sup> The town was held, like Naas, by a company or two of militia. At half-past two on the morning of the 25th the rebel force went in upon them in the darkness, with the wild Irish howl. After the defeat of the Yeomen at Kilcullen they expected to carry all before them, and came on with the utmost audacity. They were expected. Part of the garrison were drawn up in the market-place, and received them with a volley which turned the head of their column. They swerved and flung themselves on the gaol. Another volley from the gaol windows

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<sup>1</sup> 'Crosbie was tried and executed as an accomplice—Mr. Gordon says unjustly; the extent of his fault being that he was 'an advanced theoretic politician.'—*History of the Rebellion*, p. 92. The distinction, probably, was more apparent than real. The insurgents were only endeavouring to take what the politicians told them England had no right to withhold.



was delivered into the middle of them with deadly effect. They reeled, staggered, and then, struck with panic, flung down their pikes and tried to fly or hide themselves in houses. The troops had heard on the previous evening of the treachery at Prosperous. Savage in turn, they chased the miserable wretches into the by-lanes and passages, shooting and bayoneting every man they found. Four hundred bodies were taken up and buried at day-break. Many others were carried off wounded and died afterwards. It was supposed that the number of those who lost their lives was at least six hundred.

The intention had been to encompass Dublin with insurrection, to force the Government to relax its grasp upon the city. On the same 25th the Meath insurgents rose and assembled on Tara Hill, the scene of the mythic glories of the ancient Irish kingdom, four thousand strong. On the 26th they were attacked by Captain Preston and Lord Fingal, with 200 Fencibles and as many mounted Yeomen. Their commander, distinguished by his green uniform, was killed. Three hundred and fifty rebels fell with him. The rest were scattered over the country, to venture no more battles, but to confine themselves to private murders, for which they were better fitted by experience and temper.

Finding that Dublin remained quiet, that the camp at Tara had been broken up, and that the attack on Carlow had failed, the Kildare men, who were in force at Kilcullen, thought it prudent to temporise. If the

general insurrection had missed fire, they held it better to save and reserve themselves for another opportunity. They sent word to Dundas that they had taken arms in self-defence, and were ready to return to their homes if they could be assured of pardon. Dundas, who had remained trembling at Naas, listened only too eagerly. He was an officer probably of the mode of thinking of Sir Ralph Abercrombie, and believed that rebellion could be fondled into loyalty. At any rate he welcomed the prospect of escape from his own present situation. He was shut up in Naas with 400 men, sufficient, if boldly handled, to have opened a road through all the rebels in the country. But the Yeomen were out of heart; Dundas knew not whether he could trust them. The disaffection at Clane had been followed by the revolt of almost an entire corps of Yeomanry officers and men at Rathangar after the murder of their captain. The town was crowded with terrified women and children, for whose lives he was responsible. He rode over at the rebels' invitation to parley with them at Kilcullen. He made a speech to them. He took off his hat to them. With their hands red with murder and their faces grimed with the smoke of the houses which they had been burning, 'he thanked them for their good behaviour.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Musgrave says that Camden sanctioned this negotiation. He was evidently imperfectly informed. Camden writes:—

'General Dundas has been negotiating with the rebels at Kilcullen, making terms with them—treating them with civility, taking

In Dublin, meanwhile, post came in upon post bringing accounts of the rising, and the complexion of feeling varied with the news. At first men drew their breath with a sense of relief. The treason which had hung over them for so many years as an impalpable spectre could at last be grappled with. 'Martial law,' wrote Camden, 'is now established. The sword is drawn; I have kept it in the scabbard as long as possible. It must now not be returned till this conspiracy is put down.'<sup>1</sup> He hoped that, the plot in Dublin having failed, the local outbreaks would be easily crushed. The reports of the bloody scene at Prosperous, and of the universal frenzy which had burst over Kildare, showed that the expectation was delusive, and the uncontrollable indignation in the country gentlemen found a voice in the Parliament. The rebellion might be subdued eventually, but meanwhile throughout the whole country their families, their friends, their Protestant tenants and dependents, above all the Protestant clergy, were exposed to the horrors of another 1641. The treacherous assassinations of the past year showed that the Irishman was unchanged. It was no time to consider by whose fault

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off his hat to them, and thanking them for their good behaviour. There is infinite indignation among those who have lost their families and their children. The rebels have been guilty of the most barbarous and dreadful cruelties. Other propositions of surrender have been made, which I hope can

be accepted without loss of dignity or irritating the feelings of the country, which are so exasperated as scarcely to be satisfied with any thing short of extirpation.'—'To Portland, May 31. Abridged.' S P.O.

<sup>1</sup> 'To Portland, May 24.'

he had become what he was. They forgot their own negligence. They forgot the intemperate majorities by which they had encouraged Grattan in his dreams of independence. They saw only that Ireland was gone mad in the old fashion, and that they and all belonging to them were to be sacrificed. The blame might be shifted from one party to another; but they were all guilty, the careless tyrannical landlord, the scheming politician, the patriotic agitator, the uncertain, vacillating, heedless Government of England. If the guilt rested anywhere with preponderating weight, the individuals most responsible were the great Whig absentee noblemen, the Fitzwilliams, the Moiras, the Devonshires, the Shelburnes, who, by leaving undone every duty which attached to their properties, by consigning the peasantry to whose thankless toil they owed their enormous rent-rolls to the tyranny of the middlemen, and thus exasperating them into madness, had sought to shield themselves and recover a base popularity by advocating the political emancipation of a people among whom Emancipation could only mean civil war and revolution.

But these considerations, if they were to be heeded at all, had to be postponed to calmer times. The present necessity was to meet the immediate danger, and those found readiest hearing who had all along foreseen the tempest, whose Protestant prejudices were now recognised as wise conclusions gathered from the experience of centuries. The wind had been sown and could not now be recalled, and the whirlwind had

come, and they could think of nothing save that those who were dearest to them were left naked to the storm.

Lord Camden became painfully alarmed, not for the horrors only which were hourly reported to him, but for the effects of the anger and fear which they were generating.

‘There is too much reason to expect,’ he said, ‘that the war will be one in which religious animosity will be blended with political enthusiasm, and rendered more desperate from the Irish conceiving that they are fighting for that which they believe to be their own, the estates which were forfeited by the treason of their ancestors. The loyal part of the country are so indignant that I almost tremble that their zeal will drive them to acts of retaliation.’ He begged for instant and large reinforcements. He knew the influence which would be brought to bear upon the Ministry, the cry, which he knew to be false, that the rebellion was the fruit of severity, and could be extinguished with gentleness and concession. ‘It is my decided opinion,’ he declared, with all the emphasis which he could throw into the words, ‘that a continuance of vigorous measures can alone save this country. There is no safety in any other conduct than in meeting the rebellion manfully and decidedly. When it is crushed, no man can be more ready than myself to adopt whatever measures may best soften prejudice and restore confidence.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘To Portland, May 26.’

Dundas was half-believed to be a traitor in disguise. The rebels at Kilcullen had replied to his speeches with laudable promises. He dismissed them with pardons and protections, and they dispersed to burn and murder at their leisure, and despise the imbecility which had trusted them. Wicklow and Wexford were now reported to have followed suit with Kildare. Dublin was filling with fugitives. 'Wicklow, Wexford, and Kildare,' Camden wrote on the 28th, 'are in a dreadful state.' The husbands of the shuddering ladies who were rushing into the city with their little ones to tell them that their houses were burning, and that they themselves had hardly escaped with life, were swearing the extermination of the treacherous race whom it was no longer possible to bear with. Of all the advisers of the Crown who surrounded Camden, Clare and Castlereagh, the latter of whom was now acting as Camden's secretary, alone preserved their coolness.

'It is difficult to bring the rebels to action,' Castlereagh wrote on the 31st. 'They commit horrid cruelties, and disperse when the troops appear. But the spirit of the country rises with its difficulties. The result will be to place this kingdom, and of course the empire, in a state of security much beyond that in which it has stood for years past.'<sup>1</sup>

Edward Hay, the Catholic historian of the rebellion,

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<sup>1</sup> 'To Mr. Wickham, May 31.' S.P.O.

pretends an ostentatious impartiality, and affects to confess and deplore the atrocities committed by the people. He confesses only what he cannot deny, and leaves half of what is undeniable unmentioned. He attributes the rebellion itself to the harshness with which the southern counties were disarmed, and in every instance when there was marked barbarity represents it as only revenge for barbarities still greater on the other side. When he denies the right of the Government to deprive the peasants and farmers of the pikes and muskets with which they had provided themselves, he assumes that they had a right to be armed. For what purpose all Ireland had for three years turned itself into an arsenal, and every village into a place of drill, he does not care to inquire. He passes over in silence the correspondence with France, and the series of savage murders which made necessary the Insurrection Act. The Assassination Committee, the plots for the murder of the Council, are events too insignificant for him to notice; nor does he touch on the combination of treachery and ferocity which distinguished the performances in Kildare on the night of the 23rd of May. He assumes that when the Irish took arms, and used them in the manner which has been described, they were entitled to the courtesies of war, and that when punished as murderers and incendiaries they were within their rights when they retaliated in kind. This is the burden of the defence. The worth of it is recommended to the consideration of those who have read the preceding pages. Mr. Gordon,

a clergyman, whose history is accepted as the most favourable to the Protestant cause which truth will permit, and shows a real effort at impartiality, yet wrote with the same desire to soothe the wounded feelings of the Catholic party. He professes to believe that the submission to Dundas at Kilcullen was made in good faith; that if the policy thus begun had been followed, the insurrection would have died out without further violence. He attributes the bloody scenes which have next to be related, by the side of which the massacre at Prosperous seems tame and colourless, to an act of outrage on the part of the troops, by which the terms were violated which General Dundas had granted without authority.

Sir James Duff, who was in command at Limerick, hearing that Kildare had risen, and that Lake could not spare a regiment from Dublin, came across the country by forced marches to Dundas's assistance. He was in Kildare in forty-eight hours. There was a large rebel camp on the Curragh, at a place called Gibbet Rath, where the insurgents were said to be willing to lay down their arms on the terms which had been allowed at Kilcullen. When Duff advanced to receive the surrender a shot or shots were fired in the rebel lines. One account<sup>1</sup> says that the shots were aimed at the troops, that one man was killed

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<sup>1</sup> Musgrave's *History of the Rebellion*, vol. i. p. 323.



and three others wounded. Another account says that a musket was fired in the air in foolish bravado. Whichever of these stories be true, the scene which ensued is too easily intelligible. The treacherous massacre of the North Cork Militiamen at Prosperous had created such deep distrust and such savage indignation that the troops believed that they were betrayed. They rushed upon the rebels with their bayonets, and after a sharp fight drove them from the Curragh, leaving three hundred and fifty men dead upon the grass.

The intention of surrender may have been serious for the moment. It will hardly be pretended that it was offered in good faith, or that the men who were then willing to promise obedience for the future would have observed their engagements one hour beyond the time when it had ceased to be dangerous to break them. Even with this reservation the misfortune was serious, yet it was a misfortune only, for which the troops did not deserve to be blamed. If a people choose to arm with the avowed purpose of making a bloody rebellion, if their rising is no sudden movement, but has been deliberately prepared, and has been attended in all its stages by murders, house-breaking, domestic treason, and the forcible disarming of loyal subjects, their advocates have no right to complain that the police are over-rough in handling them. A more serious cause for regret is that the victims were not the men whose guilt was deepest. The forces which set in motion the Irish rebellion had

worked in the dark or behind the shield of the Constitution. Of those who took arms, the noisiest in council were the most careful of their safety in the field. Those who fell were those who fought, and those who fought were the ignorant, the simple, and the brave.

## SECTION II.

THE action at Gibbet Rath may have been an ill-timed  
 1798 accident, but whether accident or wanton cruelty  
 it was not the cause of the insurrection of Wex-  
 ford. That insurrection had already assumed its bloody  
 and desperate character, and the flying rumours of  
 murder and incendiarism beyond the Barrow were  
 among the probable causes which had exasperated and  
 infuriated the troops.

Of all the counties in Ireland Wexford had the  
 fewest grounds for taking arms, and betrayed out-  
 wardly the fewest symptoms of intending it. With a  
 fertile soil, a gentry and clergy generally resident,  
 its towns thriving, and a population made unusually  
 dense by the more advanced civilisation of its in-  
 habitants, it had escaped contact by its situation with  
 the revolutionary elements at work in the rest of the  
 island. Bounded on the east by the sea, on the north  
 and north-west by the Wicklow and Carlow hills, and  
 on the west and south by the Barrow, which divides it  
 from Kilkenny and Waterford, it forms a long par-  
 allelogram, cut in two by the Slaney, which, rising in  
 the mountains behind Glendalough, pursues its way  
 through a series of rich pasture land past New Town  
 Barry and Enniscorthy to Wexford city, where it runs  
 into the sea. Enniscorthy, to which the tide flows,  
 was, in 1798, a prosperous and growing town, with

four thousand inhabitants ; barges, lighters, and small coasting craft coming up to it and unloading at its quays. New Ross, on the Barrow, was still more considerable, and was already a place of historic fame, having been besieged by Cromwell. The population of the whole county was a hundred and thirty thousand. There were no Whiteboys among them, and no Orangemen. The landlords, if not superior to the rest of their class, were at least to be found on their estates. Arthur Young describes the land as better cultivated, the cabins and food of the Wexford peasantry as of a higher class, than what he had seen in most other parts of Ireland. He observed what was, perhaps, connected with this superiority, the unusually large Protestant congregations which were to be found in the Wexford churches. The Bishop of Ferns, Dr. Euseby Cleaver, was eminent above all his brethren on the bench for piety and learning, and especially for his kindness and generosity to the Catholic poor. Wexford city contained a population of ten thousand. The harbour was already crowded with shipping ; and as a sign of the growing wealth of the merchants there, a splendid bridge had just been erected over the wide estuary on which the town was built.

The county had not escaped the tithe agitation of 1793. A mob of two thousand men had then attempted to capture the gaol and let loose the prisoners. But they had been defeated and dispersed by five-and-thirty local police ; and so little was the state of Wexford a cause of alarm to the Government, that the

troops stationed in it had been withdrawn for service elsewhere, and the county was left to three hundred militia and the protection of its own Yeomanry. Over-confidence had encouraged disaffection. Towards the end of 1797 Wexford was discovered, like the rest of Ireland, to be secretly arming. The lagoons on the coast swarmed with wild fowl. In the cabins adjoining them were generally to be found duck-guns, and the fishermen in winter time made their living by shooting. But, besides the fowling-pieces, many muskets had crept in; pikes had been manufactured and distributed in tens of thousands. Those who had guns for lawful purposes were not interfered with; but near Gorey, a town at the north end of the county, on the Arklow road, where the Protestants were most numerous, nineteen parishes were placed in December under the Insurrection Act. The priests of these parishes complained of the precaution as an unnecessary insult to a harmless and loyal people. They swore in the presence of Lord Mountmorres that they were not United Irishmen, and that they never would be; that they would use their best endeavours to prevent or discover any conspiracy which might arise in the neighbourhood; and on the representations of these men, among whom were the two Murphies, John and Michael, who were about to become historical personages, the enforcement of the Act was suspended and the people left undisturbed, until the seizure of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's papers, in which Wexford was mentioned as a place where

the French could land with the greatest assurance of welcome.

The extent to which the inhabitants had by this time armed themselves was too notorious to be any longer denied. The magistrates of the Northern baronies met at Gorey on the 27th of April. The county was proclaimed. Orders were issued for the arms to be brought in; and, other means failing, the whip was resorted to in a few instances in Wexford as well as elsewhere. Enough was done to exasperate the people, too little to frighten them. On the 23rd of May, after Lord Edward's arrest, when it was known that a rising was intended, the magistrates issued a notice that, unless the pikes were given up, companies of soldiers would be sent among the villages on free quarter; and three gentlemen of family and fortune who had made themselves notorious for the violence of their political opinions—Mr. Bagenal Harvey, Mr. John Colclough of Ballyteigue, and Mr. Edward Fitzgerald of New Park—were arrested and confined in Wexford Gaol. On the 25th came the news that Kildare and Carlow were in arms, and it fell like sparks on tinder lying ready to kindle. On the 26th began the month of horrors, which has left one more indelible stain on the history of the Catholics of Ireland.

On that Saturday evening, the long May-day falling to twilight, a beacon was seen to blaze into flame on Corrigrua Hill, ten miles west of Ferns. A fire answering to it was seen immediately after on Boola-

vogue, between Corrigrua and the sea, and by an instinct easily explicable the inhabitants of Wexford felt that the hour was come, and prepared to meet it. If there had been doubt before of the character and aims of the rebellion, that doubt was no longer to exist. Conceived originally by Jacobins, it had become by this time a struggle of the Irish Catholics to get possession of the county. Father John Murphy, of Boolavogue, was the son of a peasant at Ferns, and had been educated for the priesthood at Seville. He had been settled in his own country a few miles from his birth-place, where he had remained waiting for the salvation of Israel, and had grown into a big, coarse, powerful man of forty, when his country called upon him for his services. It is to be hoped that his action was unpremeditated, for he had recently taken an oath of allegiance and made solemn protests of loyalty. The arrest of Lord Edward had perhaps absolved him.

This man it was that lighted the signal-fire on Corrigrua Hill. The next day was Whitsun-day, and Father John was about his work betimes. His first move was against his rival Protestant pastor, Mr. Burrows. The Protestant families in the neighbourhood, seeing the fire, had crowded for shelter into the parsonage of the adjoining parish of Kilmuckridge.

Father John, with an army of pikemen, appeared soon after daybreak on the lawn before the door. He demanded arms, and when the arms were refused set fire to the outhouses. From the outhouses the flames

spread to the parsonage itself. Mr. Burrows, a harmless gentleman, appeared at a window and begged for mercy for his family and flock. He was told that if they would come out their lives should be spared. He obeyed, and was instantly piked, with his son, a lad of sixteen, and seven of his male parishioners. The women were mercifully spared. Father John was swift, for he had a long day's work before him. Gathering up the muskets and fowling-pieces which had belonged to the house, he was soon in motion again, leaving Mrs. Burrows, with her niece and four children, sitting beside her dead husband and her dying boy, in front of her blazing home.

Having destroyed the heretic clergyman, the next object was the heretic Bishop. The Palace was at Ferns; and Ferns being Father John's native place, the purgation of it was of special consequence to him. While the day was still early he marched across country, pausing only to fire such Protestants' dwelling-houses as lay in his way. Perhaps, too, having begun the Holy War, he was anxious for a blessing on it, and halted to say mass. Arrived at Ferns, he applied the torch in like manner to heretic residences, but his special object was the Palace. Dr. and Mrs. Cleaver with their children had happily escaped. Their servants and their labourers, many of whom the Bishop supported out of charity, gave Father John a hearty welcome. An orphan lad, whom the Bishop had found starving, and had fed and brought up and educated, displayed his gratitude by singular eagerness to assist



in the injury of his benefactor. The Palace was plundered. The valuable library was torn to pieces. The vellum bindings of the books of divinity were stripped off and used for saddle-covers. When the spoils were all secured the shell of the house was set on fire, and all that would burn was consumed.

Father John was no longer alone. He found a brother in spirit and in arms in Father Michael Murphy, his neighbour, who now hastened to join him. Father Michael also was the son of a Wexford peasant. He had learnt his Latin grammar at a hedge-school on Oulart Hill. Thence, growing into promising boyhood, he was transferred to the Irish College at Bordeaux; and finding favour with Dr. Caulfield, the Catholic Bishop of Ferns, he had been appointed curate of Ballycanew, a hamlet adjoining Kilmuckridge. The holocaust at Kilmuckridge parsonage had brought him at once to the standard of the Cross. Having finished work at Ferns, the two priests, their army now swollen to several thousand men, spread over the adjoining district, sacking houses and burning them, and killing every heretic man that they were able to identify. By mid-day they had drifted to Oulart,<sup>1</sup> and encamped on the hill, for dinner, five thousand strong.

The news that the people were out had been brought early in the day into Wexford city. All the morning messengers were coming in, bringing accounts

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<sup>1</sup> Midway between Enniscorthy, six miles south-east of Ferns, and the sea, five miles from each, | eleven north of Wexford.

of the murdering and burning, and praying for help to those who were left exposed. The garrison in the town was scanty, but Colonel Foote was despatched after breakfast with a hundred and ten of the North Cork men and thirty or forty mounted Yeomen—a force considered amply sufficient to subdue any resistance which they were likely to meet with. At four o'clock the same afternoon, Mr. Perceval, the High Sheriff, galloped wildly in over the bridge to say that all was lost—that Foote and his entire party had been totally destroyed. Supposing that he had to deal only with a contemptible mob, Colonel Foote had flung himself on a body of men who fifty times outnumbered him, mad with the excitement of a religious war, and armed with a weapon which in determined hands was gradually discovered to be formidable. Father John, seeing that he was to be attacked, had divided his force with extemporised generalship. Finding the rebels stand better than they expected, the troops recoiled, to re-form, when they found that they were surrounded and their retreat cut off. Most of the Yeomen deserted. Panic set in among the North Cork men. They broke their ranks and attempted to fly. They were cut down almost to a man. There were no wounded in these battles. Every one who fell was despatched. The report that Colonel Foote had himself fallen was untrue. The Colonel only, with a sergeant and three privates, made his way back to Wexford. Major Lombard, Captain De Courcy, and four other officers had been killed.

The battle over, Father John rested from his labours, entering in his diary a brief epitome of the first day's work :—

' Began the Republic of Ireland in Boulavogue, in the county of Wexford; commanded by the Rev. Doctor Murphy, parish priest of the said parish, where all the Protestants of the said parish were disarmed, and a bigot, named Bookey, lost his life by his rashness. Then came to a country village adjoining, where the Republic attacked a minister's house for arms, and was denied. Laid siege to it, and killed him and all his forces. The same day burned his house and all the Orangemen's houses in that and all adjoining parishes in that part of the country. The same day a part of the army attacked the Republic on Oulart Hill, when the military were repulsed, with the loss of 112 men. And the same day took another town and seat of a bishop.' <sup>1</sup>

The effect of Foote's defeat was frightful. The widows and children of the North Cork men who had fallen rushed about the streets of Wexford wringing their hands and shrieking. Their comrades threatened to break into the gaol and retaliate on Bagenal Harvey and his two companions. Edward Hay, the historian of the rebellion, gave a hint to the gaoler, and the gaoler supplied the prisoners with arms for self-defence. The inhabitants of the city generally were four-fifths of them Catholics and dis-

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<sup>1</sup> *Father Murphy's Journal*—Musgrave. Appendix, 18, 1.

affected. Fierce, gloomy knots of men began to gather about the quays, while the Protestant ladies and clergy took refuge in the ships in the harbour, offering high prices for a passage to Wales. The panic spread through the country. The exposed Protestant families crowded on all sides into the nearest towns; while Father John, reposing for the night on his field of glory, sent out his scouts, calling on the peasants to shoulder their pikes and join him on the following morning.

If the reader will turn to a map of the county he will see on the Slaney, twelve miles above Wexford, the town, which has been already mentioned, of Enniscorthy. The river is here crossed by a bridge. The town itself stands on the west side. On the east, immediately opposite, rises a rounded eminence known as Vinegar Hill, about four hundred feet high. The summit was then open grass, surmounted by a ruined windmill. The slope toward the river was enclosed in gardens and small fields. Below the town the Slaney could only be crossed at low tide, and made its way to the sea between rich meadows and woods, just bursting at the time of the rebellion into their early summer foliage.

Enniscorthy, as commanding the passage between the two divisions of the county, was important enough to have retained a tolerable garrison, composed of eighty men of the unfortunate North Cork—whose comrades had fallen at Oulart and Prosperous—a hundred and sixty Yeomen belonging to the town itself, and sixty

more from Ferns and the adjoining baronies. Captain Snowe, of the North Cork, was in command. Captain Drury, a local officer of Yeomanry, who commanded under him, had seen service in the American war. Father John's performances had sent every Protestant in the neighbourhood who had escaped his pikemen into Enniscorthy for shelter. There were several hundred, the greater part women, children, and old men. They had left their property to be destroyed, but in the town they believed that their lives would be safe. So they would have been, had the insurrection been no more than a common riot. But Father John, after his victory over Foote, aspired to be the liberator of his country. He required possession of Enniscorthy Bridge, that he might open his way to New Ross and Kilkenny. Oulart was but five miles distant, and Snowe was not long in learning that he must prepare to be attacked in the morning.

The townspeople, with the exception of the few who were enlisted as Yeomen, were all on the rebel side. He had the Yeomen's families to protect, as well as the fugitives from the country. In these hard circumstances he made the best dispositions in his power. He arrested the most dangerous of the inhabitants, and locked them up in the gaol and market-house. The North Cork were posted on the bridge, on the direct road from Oulart. The Yeomen were placed at the back, where the roads entered from the north and west. In this position they lay under arms through the night of Whitsun-day.

Next morning Father John was early astir. His call had been well answered. The news of his first triumph had rung a peal through every parish in the neighbourhood. Among the recruits who had come in to him before daybreak were a few score of duck-shooters from the marshes—experienced shots, armed with their long fowling-pieces. He had secured the muskets and pouches of the dead soldiers, and he found himself with 800 men possessed of fire-arms of one kind or another, besides 5,000 pikemen. To use his numbers to advantage he manœuvred as on the previous day. The Slaney was fordable a few miles above Enniscorthy. Leaving a division to move direct upon the bridge, he marched at dawn with the main body, crossed the river, and gained the road which descends the west bank from New Town Barry. It was now eleven o'clock. He halted for half an hour to say mass, and then advanced along the road at the head of his men, while the other division was approaching to attack the bridge. It was a hot summer morning. Father John was a born general. The country outside the town was intersected with walls and fences. He threw out skirmishers on either side of him, who availed themselves of the natural cover, and pressed on from bank to bank. According to ancient Irish custom he drove along the road in front of him a herd of wild cattle, goaded into madness, who rushed into the Yeomen's lines. The duck-shooters fired steadily. Captain Drury said that in all his American experience he had never seen guns better handled.

The soldiers were raw hands, caught up but a few weeks before, and scarcely better disciplined than the rebels. Outnumbered twenty to one, with the cattle plunging upon them, and losing men fast, the Yeomen sent to Snowe for assistance. Snowe had by this time his own hands full at the river, and needed rather help himself than was able to spare support to others. They gave way, but very slowly, fighting desperately inch by inch. A Yeoman named Thompson was struck in the neck by a ball. He cut it out, loaded his musket with it, and returned it. Still numbers told. As the rebels advanced they kindled the houses on each side of the street, and the battle went on under an arch of flame. The inhabitants, seeing the soldiers retreating, fired upon them from the windows. Women rushed out among the bullets with whisky-bottles and glasses to cheer the patriots' hearts. The streets were strewed with dead and dying, five rebels falling for each Yeoman; but they still dauntlessly pressed on, till the troops were driven back upon the market-place. There, among stone houses, which would not burn, the soldiers recovered their advantage. Themselves under shelter, they sent their volleys with destructive effect into the exposed mass of men who were struggling within ten paces of their guns; and in the afternoon Father John, seeing he could make no further progress, and was throwing away lives unnecessarily, fell back to the fields outside, and prepared to try again at nightfall.

Captain Snowe had held his ground with less difficulty. He had been assailed with equal determination,

but his men were better protected by situation. Foiled at the bridge, the rebels had twice attempted to force a passage above and below. They were beaten back at both points. By two o'clock the town was cleared, and Enniscorthy was still in possession of the loyalists.

But in what condition was it left? Half the town was burning. Five hundred rebels lay about the streets, dead and dying. The prisons were crowded with desperate men, whom there was no force to guard. The Catholic inhabitants were furious. Of the scanty garrison a third had been killed, besides the wounded; and an unknown number of Protestant gentlemen and tradesmen who had given their services had fallen also. Outside was the fast-increasing insurgent army, savage for revenge; within were several hundred unfortunate beings—families of tradesmen and farmers, households of gentry and clergy—all now on a common level of misery. The garrison might maintain themselves in the gaol, but these forlorn creatures, when the rebels broke in again, must inevitably be sacrificed. To prevent a scene which would have rivalled the worst infamies of 1641, Snowe decided on evacuating the town and escorting his charge to Wexford.

It was a frightful alternative. The distance was but twelve miles, and the weather was dry and warm; but there were no carriages, no horses, save the few belonging to the mounted Yeomen, and these, though cheerfully surrendered, were altogether inadequate. There were wounded men to be transported, and delicate ladies and little children, too young to walk,



too old for their mothers to carry them; and the infirm and aged, and the sick and impotent.

Yet to leave them behind was to leave them to certain death. Late in the afternoon the miserable march began. The insurgents rushed in as the troops filed out. Women, unable to reach the bridge, waded the river to escape them, with their babies on their backs. The march was rapid. Two miles below, on the Wexford road, they passed a wood, known as the Wood of St. John, or Ringwood; and many poor creatures, struggling painfully on, were tempted to fling themselves down among the brushwood, hoping to lie concealed there till morning. The rest, of stronger limb or stouter spirit, pushed forward, and soon after nightfall found a brief respite from their sufferings within Wexford gates.

Had the rebels followed they might all have been destroyed. Happily that evening they attempted no pursuit. They were busy in Enniscorthy sacking the Protestants' houses, piking such obnoxious wretches as were found loitering, burying their dead, or in the wild revel of their second victory.

Father John's fast-expanding mind was engaged upon another project, which with the morning he hastened to execute. He conceived it would be desirable to have a standing camp as a rallying-point for the county. For such a purpose no place was more central, more convenient, more appropriate in every way, than the crest of Vinegar Hill.

The insurgents were increasing with marvellous

rapidity, and their numbers soon amounted to tens of thousands. Men in good position in society came—John Hay, of Newcastle, a so-called gentleman; Edward Roche, a wealthy yeoman; Father Roche, his kinsman, and twenty other priests. With men came women, some vagrants, some whisky-selling, some to dress their husbands' or brothers' food, some for the wild enjoyment of the strife. With such organisation as he could extemporise Father John made his preparations for their entertainment. The weather was fine, and well suited for out-door encamping. The Protestant houses in Enniscorthy and for many miles round were searched, and relieved of their contents. Before the evening of Whit-Tuesday the slopes and brow of Vinegar Hill were dotted over with hundreds of booths, of motley colour, shape, and material. Carpets, window-curtains, sheets, blankets, whatever came first to hand, were stretched on poles and made into tents. The women appropriated the ladies' wardrobes, and fluttered in silks and feathers. Barrels of wine and ale were rolled up out of the cellars of squire and parson, and mounted on tressels, for all who pleased to help themselves. Pianos were brought for such as had skill in music. Blind minstrels were gathered from far and near, and sounded out the old airs of Ireland on harps which but a few days before were touched by delicate fingers in gilded drawing-rooms. In curious contrast the manners and habits were revived spontaneously of the great days of Erin's ancient chiefs. Cattle were driven in from neighbouring farms and

parks. At feeding-times cows and oxen were knocked down, and slices were cut from the unflayed and fresh-bleeding carcasses and toasted on the points of pikes.

All sorts were gathered together—men of good condition, traders, farmers, shopkeepers, interspersed with plundering ruffians; high and low blended harmoniously together in the uprising of the true Irish nature such as when left to itself it tended to become. So little trust had they in each other's honesty that they slept on their faces, with their hats and shoes under them, lest they should wake and find them gone. Two exercises only were discharged with regularity and punctuality on Vinegar Hill. Law might be forgotten, but religion was remembered. Twenty priests said mass each day at different points of the camp; and each day a holocaust of Protestants was offered to the national divinities. The windmill on the brow of the hill and a barn at the bottom were appropriated as prisons, and gangs of ruffians were sent out to scour the country and bring in every Protestant that could be found. Ringwood, where the feeblest of the Enniscorthy fugitives had taken refuge for the night, was drawn in the morning, as hounds draw a fox-cover. Many poor creatures, and those perhaps the happiest, were piked upon the spot. Others were carried captive to the hill, where a council of leaders was held to determine on the treatment of them. Some were for an instant and indiscriminating massacre; others, Father Roche especially, were against

murder in cold blood.<sup>1</sup> It was decided finally that those only should be put to death who could be proved to have been actively traitors to the Irish cause. A court-martial was established in permanent session outside the windmill. The prisoners were brought before it in batches, like the aristocrats before Fouquier Tinville, and on receiving sentence were passed out to instant execution on the pikes of the rebel guard in waiting. On the first day, as an inauguration ceremonial for the camp, twenty-four victims were condemned, and were stabbed or shot. As the windmill prison was emptied it was refilled from the barn. The barn was kept supplied from the country. Every day, so long as the camp continued, the bloody work went forward—the crimson blossoming of the tree of liberty which had been planted by Grattan in '82. A large tub of water was daily blessed to sprinkle the miserable assassins and persuade them that they were Christ's soldiers. It is expressly recorded that those most ready with their services on these occasions were not the peasantry, but men who had received what is now called education.

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<sup>1</sup> See the depositions.—*Musgrave*, vol. ii. Appendix 19. The general character of the proceedings on Vinegar Hill is not disputed. The difference is only as to the number murdered there. Musgrave's estimate is 500. Gordon reduces it to 400.

## SECTION III.

FATHER JOHN was too enterprising a general to rest upon his laurels. Others could superintend executions of Protestants. Father John's place was in pursuing the campaign which he had so auspiciously commenced. On Whitsun-day he had murdered a clergyman and his parishioners. He had burnt a Bishop's palace, and had fought and won a battle. On Whit-Monday he had fought another and more desperate battle, and had taken Enniscorthy. On Whit-Tuesday, having established his camp and left ten thousand men there, he marched the same afternoon to Wexford. Flood, Grattan, Wolfe Tone, O'Connor, Edward Fitzgerald, these all in their way had seemed to pass for representative Irish patriots. But here was the real thing. The politicians were but shadows; Father John was the substance. With pistols in his holsters, his sword at his side, and a large crucifix in his arms, he rode at the head of his army, the true and perfect representative of Catholic and Celtic Ireland. His object now was Wexford city. He encamped that night four miles from it, at a place called Three Rocks, under Mount Forth, on the road from Wexford to Taghmon. When the news spread of the defeat at Oulart, General Fawcett, who commanded at Duncannon, guessing that Wexford might be in danger, sent Colonel Maxwell thither in haste, with 200 men of a Donegal regiment.

They arrived on Whit-Tuesday morning, to find the town in a confusion approaching on panic. Half the garrison had been killed at Oulart, and that first disaster had been followed in less than thirty hours by the news of the battle at Enniscorthy, and the appearance of Snowe with the remnant of his Yeomen and the miserable beings under his charge. Ladies, and such of their husbands and brothers as were unwilling or afraid to fight, were hurrying on board vessels with redoubled speed, offering half their fortunes for a safe conduct to England, the boatmen making a harvest of their fears. Shortly after Maxwell's arrival a report came in that Father John was advancing. Maxwell, finding matters so much worse than he expected, sent a mounted messenger back to Duncannon, to bid Fawcett come up himself with all the force that he had. Fitzgerald, of New Park, and Mr. Colclough were released and sent to meet Father John and persuade him to leave Wexford alone. Fitzgerald remained with the rebels. Colclough returned to say that they were close to the city, and might be looked for with certainty on the following morning. The fate of the city depended on Fawcett. He started from Duncannon with two regiments, the 13th and the Meath Militia, immediately on receiving Maxwell's message. Two companies of the Meath, which were most speedily in marching order, were sent in advance, with some artillerymen and a couple of guns, Fawcett promising to overtake them at Taghmon. Fawcett loitered on the way. The officer in command of the advanced party, hearing

that Wexford was threatened, resolved, after waiting some hours, to push forward; and in total ignorance that Father John now lay on his road, at the foot of the Forth Mountain, went on about midnight. All was quiet till he reached Three Rocks, and was almost within sight of Wexford, when the darkness was lighted by the flashes of five hundred muskets. Above, below, before, behind, the rebels were everywhere, yelling like hyenas. Surprised and surrounded, the half-trained Meath men lost coherence. They had to do with an enemy whose policy was to kill the Irish militia as traitors to their country, and the savage character of the war added to the terror. They were cut down to a man. The guns were taken. A few of the artillerymen were kept alive, to serve them. One single officer alone survived to carry the tale to Maxwell. Notwithstanding this disaster Wexford might have been saved had Fawcett possessed conduct or courage; but the evil spirit of Abercrombie had unnerved too many of the English generals. Fawcett, who had reached Taghmon in the morning, at once turned back and retreated on Duncannon. Maxwell pushed out from the town, hoping to meet him on the road. He arrived at Three Rocks, only to find Father John too strongly posted for his small force to dislodge. The mounted Yeomanry were unsteady and fled. His infantry were driven back with loss; and he had to retreat into the town.

Wexford, too, like Enniscorthy, had now become untenable. The bulk of the inhabitants were at

heart with the rebels, and were kept quiet only by fear. If Father John advanced they would certainly rise and assist him. The troops could no longer be relied upon; and the citizens, Catholic and Protestant, who had property to lose, and feared that the place would be set on fire, entreated Maxwell not to defend it.<sup>1</sup>

'I refused to consent,' Maxwell wrote in his report to General Eustace. 'I ordered the troops to their posts; but when I visited the barriers, to my astonishment and concern, I found that the Yeomanry corps<sup>2</sup> had quitted their places. At one post, where I expected sixty or seventy men, there were not three privates. At another, a like number. The men of the North Cork refused to obey their officers, or take further part against the rebels. I could not further oppose or take on myself the responsibility of subjecting the loyal part of the garrison to the resentment of a numerous and sanguinary rabble.'<sup>3</sup>

The North Cork were scarcely to be blamed. Being Catholics, they were regarded as deserters from the national cause. One detachment of them had been destroyed at Prosperous, another at Oulart. At Enniscorthy they had fought splendidly, and had

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hay accuses Maxwell of cowardice. He insists that the inhabitants were loyal, and would have supported him, and that the unnecessary evacuation of the town was the sole cause of the horrors which ensued. As in an image

in a looking-glass, every feature in the story is thus precisely reversed.

<sup>2</sup> Raised in Wexford itself from among the inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> 'Colonel Maxwell to General Eustace, June 1, 1798.' S.P.O.



retreated only before numbers enormously superior. The Meath corps had been cut to pieces. Fawcett had deserted them. Maxwell himself had been beaten in a skirmish, which proved that Father John was too strong for him. The enemy was without, and traitors were within. Their own wives and their comrades' widows were shrieking round them. The last virtue which has been honoured and rewarded in Ireland by her English masters is excess of loyalty. The rule has been to conciliate traitors and leave fidelity to be its own compensation.

At midnight, on the 30th of May, Maxwell marched out of Wexford, thirty-six hours after he had entered, and retreated by the sea-road, which was still open, to Duncannon. His soldiers are charged with having been guilty of some outrages on the way—burning houses and flogging men. It may have been so; discipline is rarely sustained in the wreck of a beaten army; and the road lay through the Barony of Forth, which had supplied Father John with the duck-shooters, from whose long guns they had suffered at Enniscorthy. Maxwell himself merely says that he reached Duncannon without interruption.

On the morning of the 31st the rebels from Three Rocks moved on to Wexford. They halted outside the barriers for the whole line to kneel and pray; and they then rushed in upon the spoils. For three days there was a saturnalia of madness; the houses of the Protestants were sacked, the gaol was thrown

open; the prisoners, Bagenal Harvey among them, were released in triumph, and loyal Protestants were thrust in to take their places. Wild Amazons rode about the streets, with plumed hats and pikes in hand. A man named Keogh, once a captain in the army and a magistrate, was appointed Governor, and the green flag of Ireland floated over the barracks. The ships which had been hired to carry the fugitives to England were still in the harbour. Among the largest shipowners at Wexford was a man named Dixon, a tavern and billiard-room keeper on the Quay. This person, having extorted enormous sums for the use of his vessels, had contrived under various pretexts to delay their sailing. When the English flag was hauled down and the Irish harp was blowing out in its place, the Protestants on board prayed the captains to cut their cables and depart. The same sacred emblem of liberty was run up for answer to the mast-heads. Boats came off from the quays, led by Dixon in person. The fugitives were invited with mocking courtesy to disembark and return. Some were carried to the crowded gaol, some were forced on board a miserable hulk below the bridge, which was converted into a prison-ship.

To maintain the fiction of a united Ireland, Protestant gentlemen of liberal sympathies were offered the alternative of joining the patriot army. Cornelius Grogan, a gentleman of large fortune in the neighbourhood, took the United Irish oath, as he represented afterwards, 'to save his property.' Mr.

Colclough and Bagenal Harvey, who had been imprisoned by the Government for their revolutionary sentiments, were released and promoted. Colclough drove through the town with his wife, with green ribands flying. Bagenal Harvey accepted a command in the rebel army. At Vinegar Hill the spirit was savage from the first, in consequence of the fight at Enniscorthy. At Wexford, where there had been no resistance, the thirst for blood had not yet been awakened. A few obnoxious gentlemen were piked and shot under special provocation; others were sent out to receive their deserts on Vinegar Hill. The feeling in Wexford for the first few days was chiefly of triumph and exultation. Victorious Ireland desired rather to show her zeal for saving souls than for destroying bodies, and frightened heretics were dragged or led in batches to the Catholic chapels, to be converted into Christians.

Father John meanwhile had his eyes on larger objects. Wexford was secured, but a local rising could not hope for permanent success. If the insurrection was to triumph, it must spread: it must envelope Ireland. Nothing had really been done till Dublin especially had been wrested from the invader. The organisation of the past years was now telling. The people everywhere were prepared to rise, and the rebel army had only to show itself to be swollen by the local levies. More extended operations had become necessary to deliver Dublin. The number of armed men who could be counted upon was practically

unlimited. A second permanent camp was established at Three Rocks, and the movable forces were divided into three great bodies. The first, under Bagenal Harvey, with Father Roche as second in command, was directed to take New Ross, force the passage of the Barrow, and raise Kilkenny and Waterford. The second division was ordered to move up the Slaney from Enniscorthy, take New Town Barry, sweep the loyalists out of the north of the country; and then, advancing through Carlow into Kildare, threaten Dublin on the west. The third division Father John reserved for himself and his friend, Father Michael. His intention was to march north through his own county, to force Arklow, and make his way along the sea-road into Wicklow, where the levies of the county were waiting to join him. With Wicklow in their hands on one side, Kildare on the other, and the central plain of Ireland on fire behind them, the rebels calculated, not without reason, that Dublin could not long hold out.

## SECTION IV

HITHERTO the defence of Ireland had fallen almost entirely on her own people. Camden had applied  
 1798 repeatedly for reinforcements. The Government had sent a regiment of cavalry, which was comparatively useless. Portland said, in reply to remonstrances, that he understood the insurrection to be too inconsiderable to require a large addition to the number of the troops. He had been taught to believe that the danger was from the North. So long as Ulster was quiet he attached little consequence to disturbances in the rest of the island. The mistake was inexcusable, for Abercrombie had told him that ten thousand British troops would be required if the South was to be disarmed, and now the South was in the field.

Lord Camden's position was thus cruelly difficult. He might hear at any moment that a French army had landed. The Dublin mob were only held in check by the presence of an overwhelming garrison, which by its concentration left the country exposed. At any moment also he might hear of what he dreaded even more than the French—the rising of the Presbyterians. From 1791 to 1797 Ulster had been the chief seat of discontent. It was at Belfast that the taking of the Bastille had been celebrated with such passionate sympathy. It was among the Scotch-Irish artisans that Jacobin principles had taken earliest root. Down and Antrim

had furnished the emigrants who fought at Bunker's Hill and Lexington. It seemed incredible that when the long-talked-of crisis had come Ulster would take no part in it. The Viceroy's friends in the revolutionary committee continued to apprise him of its secret workings. A week had passed since the fatal 23rd. 'The bleach-greens were still strewed with linen,' 'the artisans were still at their looms.' The informers reported that the friends of liberty were less enthusiastic. The doings of France in Switzerland were giving dissatisfaction. There were murmurs at French tyranny in the West Indies. The Orangemen were an alarming feature to the rebel mind. Though the Viceroy had not employed them hitherto, he might be less scrupulous if there was open insurrection, and they confessed to serious fear of the Orangemen. Most of all, 'an alteration had been worked in their minds by the Popish tinge of the rebellion, the Catholics in the South making the rising a matter of religion.'<sup>1</sup>

Still, entire quiet in a part of the country which had been so violently demonstrative was 'unaccountable.' The Ulster men, who were more deliberate and determined than the Southerners, were the less likely to have changed their minds completely and suddenly. Camden could not yet venture to withdraw or even weaken the Northern garrisons. When the news arrived of the capture of Wexford, either he or General

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, June 2.' 'Cooke to Wickham, June 2, 1798.' S.P.O.

Lake divined the course which the rebels were likely to take. It was essential, if possible, to enclose and trample out the insurrection within the limits of the county where it was for the present victorious; and, short-handed as he was, the Viceroy immediately made such efforts as his resources allowed. Fresh regiments were enrolled out of the Dublin loyalists to take charge of the city. A portion of the garrison was thus released. General Loftus was sent with 250 additional men to join the garrison of Arklow. Colonel L'Estrange was sent to New Town Barry, with 400 militia and a couple of field-guns, to block the road from Enniscorthy to Carlow. Colonel Walpole was directed to take up a position, with 500 men from Naas and Kilcullen, at a place called Carnew, half-way between the position of L'Estrange at New Town Barry and that of Loftus at Arklow. The three columns were then to advance in parallel lines towards Wexford. Such a force, the Viceroy calculated, would overwhelm all resistance.<sup>1</sup> The strength, the skill, the resolution of the rebels were still far under-estimated, as Camden was bitterly to find. It was too much to expect that a thousand half-drilled militia, men taken hastily from desk and plough, could encounter fifty times their number. L'Estrange was in time to save New Town Barry. He reached the place by forced marches a few hours only before it was attacked. The rebels came up on the 1st of June from Vinegar Hill, on both sides of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, June 4, 1798.'

river. Their leader was a priest, a huge savage named Father Kern.<sup>1</sup> Other priests acted as officers of their own parishioners. The victories over the troops had by this time furnished the insurgents with artillery; they had a brass six-pounder with them, a howitzer, and some swivel-guns. They came on with the usual Irish howl. L'Estrange allowed them to enter the streets, when they began at once to burn and plunder.<sup>2</sup> He then opened upon them with grape and musketry. When they turned to fly they were pursued and cut up by the Yeomanry. Four hundred fell. Among the bodies were found two priests, in their vestments.

Loftus and Walpole reached their posts on the same day, and so far without accident. Loftus, on the 3rd of June, finding no enemy in front of him, felt his way cautiously out of Arklow, along the Wexford road. Lord Ancram, on the same day, descended the Slaney from New Town Barry. Walpole advanced simultaneously, as he was ordered, from Carnew, parallel to both of them. Had all gone well, he would have joined Ancram at Ferns. Together they would have attacked Enniscorthy and Vinegar Hill, and after carrying them would have combined with Loftus in recovering Wexford. Walpole, to his misfortune, was

<sup>1</sup> 'A man of extraordinary strength, stature, and ferocity.'—Gordon's *History of the Rebellion*, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gordon, who, though a Protestant Clergyman, shows a strong prejudice in particular di-

rections, declares that L'Estrange, 'according to the too commonly practised mode of the King's officers,' advised a retreat, and was only brought back into action by the remonstrances of Colonel West-enra.—*Gordon*, p. 130.



confronted by Father John, and Father John proved himself once more a dangerous antagonist. The body of rebels under his command had been moving leisurely, according to the plan which had been concerted, towards Arklow. His camp on that day was on Ballymore Hill, between Ferns and the sea; and as Walpole and Loftus marched on their several ways Father John was at last between them. Bent simply on their object, they were wholly ignorant that he was so near. Walpole had been warned to be careful, but he had neglected the most simple precautions. He had no advance guard, and had sent out no skirmishing parties on either side of him. His line of march was among lanes and hedges and wooded enclosures, thick with the newly opened leaves. Suddenly, at a narrow pass, he found the road blocked, and shot poured in upon him from invisible enemies. He himself, being in full uniform, and conspicuous on a tall grey horse, was killed early in the action. His men fell into confusion. They were in a position where they could neither advance nor retreat, nor reach their enemies. After three-quarters of an hour of hopeless effort, in which more than half of them were killed and their guns taken, the wreck of the detachment contrived to extricate itself, and made its escape to Gorey. The news of their defeat preceded them. In Gorey the houses were lined with sharpshooters, who fired on them from the windows. They were driven through the town; and mingling with a crowd of flying Protestants, struggled on till they reached Arklow.

Loftus was now exposed to a similar fate. The fugitives from Walpole's force had passed behind him, along the road on which he had advanced in the morning. He now had Father John in his rear. Wexford was in his front, but he could not venture upon Wexford single and unsupported. By a dexterous cross-march over Slievebuoy Mountain he contrived to reach Carnew, on which Lord Ancram also had found himself obliged to fall back. The first combined effort to recover Wexford had thus utterly failed; and a yet more serious consideration was, that the Arklow garrison was so weakened by the loss of the force with Loftus as to be incapable of present resistance. Father John, if he used his opportunity, might march to Dublin unfought with.

Camden was now for the first time really alarmed. The reports from the North were less favourable, and Walpole's defeat might turn the scale. He felt that he had been unjustly neglected. He was left alone with the Irish Yeomen and Militia, a third of whom were unfaithful. The cruelties towards the Irish which he had been accused of encouraging or permitting might too easily become realities, when the scenes which were now recurring daily on Vinegar Hill became generally known. He could now neither oppose the rebels nor restrain the Protestants from retaliation, and under the weight of the last blow he addressed a letter of earnest remonstrance to Portland:—

'The aspect of the rebellion becomes most alarming.

The North will rise, unless the rebels near Dublin can be crushed. The salvation of Ireland, on which Great Britain as an empire eventually depends, requires that this rebellion should be instantly suppressed. No event but instant extinction can prevent it from becoming general, as it is notorious that the whole country is organised. The Chancellor, the Speaker, all the friends of his Majesty's Government whom I am in the habit of consulting, have this day given it as their solemn opinion, and have required me to state it as such, that the salvation of Ireland depends on immediate and very considerable succour—that a few regiments will perhaps only be sent to slaughter or to loss. This opinion is perfectly well founded. General Lake agrees. I make this appeal to your Grace in the most solemn manner. My services cannot be useful to his Majesty unless I can restore the confidence of the kingdom, and immediately and effectually suppress the rebellion.'<sup>1</sup>

It was quite certain that at this particular moment Father John could, if he had pleased, have reached Dublin with ease. He had twenty thousand men with him at Ballymore. He would have doubled his numbers before he had arrived at Bray, and at Bray he would have been but a day's march from the city. Happily for the country, he had been rendered careless by his extraordinary successes, and for the first time allowed an opportunity to escape him.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, June 5, 1798.' S.P.O.

## SECTION V.

TWO of the great divisions of the rebels were thus accounted for—one had been defeated at Carnew, the other victorious at Ballymore. The third, <sup>1798</sup> under Bagenal Harvey and Father Roche, had meanwhile made leisurely approaches upon New Ross. The undertaking was not an easy one, for New Ross was better defended than Enniscorthy. When it was known to be in danger General Johnstone had been sent to take charge of it with several companies of militia, some English artillerymen, a squadron of dragoons, and part of a Midlothian Fencible regiment. A County Dublin regiment, which was pushed forward after Walpole's overthrow, commanded by Lord Mountjoy, arrived late on the 4th of June, and raised Johnstone's force to 1,400 men. The rebels on their side had commenced by making a camp, six miles off, at Carrickbyrne Hill, from which they plundered the adjoining baronies. Having taken many Protestants, they put them in the barn at Scullabogue, a place belonging to a Captain King, at the hill-foot; they placed a guard in the dwelling-house; they then pushed forward, and arrived at Corbet Hill, overhanging the Barrow Valley, on the afternoon of the same day on which Mountjoy arrived.

New Ross stands on the slope which rises on the Wexford bank of the river. It was at that time surrounded

by a wall, which had once resisted Cromwell. There were four gates, two at the bottom of the town, by the water-side, through which the high road passed from Dublin to Waterford, and two above. Large vessels of four hundred tons could lie alongside of the quay. Cross-streets and lanes ran up the hill-side to the market-place and the barracks. The Enniscorthy road entered at the top of the town, at the market-gate, at the north-east angle. From the market a long broad street ran parallel to the river half-way up the hill, and issued at the Three Bullet Gate, to which the road descended from Corbet Hill and Wexford. The rebel camp was a mile and a half distant. The troops were under arms all night. They were paraded at two in the morning, and as day began to break the peculiar Irish cry was heard rising in gathering waves of sound in the direction of the camp. Nearer and clearer it came through the morning air. The rebels advanced slowly and in enormous numbers. Scouts said they were not less than thirty thousand, and General Johnstone considered that, 'from the myriads which came down, they could not be much less.' They marched in order by parishes and by baronies. The Dublin regiment under Mountjoy, the dragoons, and other companies were drawn up outside the Three Bullet Gate, on open ground. The rebel masses bore down the hill towards them.

When a rifle shot off they halted. Priests were seen moving up and down the lines in their vestments and carrying crucifixes. Mass was said at the head of every

column, the men kneeling, with marked and earnest devotion. For the moment Johnstone thought that they were hesitating, but he was swiftly undeceived. It was now a little after three o'clock, daylight being scarcely yet fully established. They rose from their knees; the lines opened, and between them came herds of wild cattle rushing on, amidst shouts and yells which burst from the enormous multitude, the rebels pricking them forward with their pikes. A fourth part of the rebel army had fire-arms, but their main strength was in the pikemen, who formed in column behind the cattle and charged with a fierceness of resolution for which the English and Scotch officers present were unprepared.<sup>1</sup> They rushed upon the Dublin regiment, which was in some confusion, and drove it back through the gate. Mountjoy fell wounded, and was carried off into the insurgent lines. The dragoons charged, but without effect, and recoiled with loss. A gun was taken, and the rebel pikemen poured into the town after the retreating troops. According to their usual tactics they instantly fired the houses. Cannon had been placed in the long straight street which leads from

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel Crawford, writing from Ross on the 9th of June, stated that before the action he had the most contemptible opinion of the rebels. He expected that they would be easily hunted together by small columns, and then disposed of. 'I have now,' he said,

'totally changed my opinion. I never saw any troops attack with more enthusiasm and bravery than the rebels did on the 5th. We must proceed against them with caution as well as vigour, and with a much larger force.' S.P.O.

the market-place to the Bullet Gate, and poured round-shot and grape into their dense masses. Hundreds fell. An entire column was annihilated—not a man escaped out of it. Brave as they were, so terrible a reception startled them. They fell back for a while, and the troops had time to rally and re-form. But soon they came on again through smoke and flame, their courage and their overwhelming numbers compensating for want of discipline and inferiority of arms. Nor was the pike in the hands of a strong bold man a weapon to be lightly regarded. With a shaft twelve or fifteen feet in length, a long taper point, and a hook at times attached, which would drag a horseman from his saddle, it was an overmatch under some conditions for the bayonet. Johnstone's advantage was in his heavy guns. The rebels had no artillerymen, and such cannon as they captured they were unable to use. But the daring of the Irish on that day defied even artillery. A spectator from a window close to the spot from whence a gun was strewing the streets with piles of dead saw a man rush straight upon it, and thrust his hat into the smoking nozzle, crying, 'Come on, boys; her mouth is stopped!' In another second he was blown to atoms. Careless in their desperate fanaticism,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Musgrave says that they had taken the following oath before starting, and that copies of it were found on the bodies of the slain: — 'I swear by our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered for us on the Cross, and by the Blessed Virgin Mary, that I will burn, destroy, and murder all heretics, up to my knees in blood.'

the Irish showed for once in rebellion the contempt of danger which, as soldiers in the army of their sovereign, they never fail to show. Four guns were taken. They forced the troops backwards and downwards to the river, part into the market-place, where, as at Enniscorthy, the stone buildings became a fortress which they could neither burn nor penetrate; part down over the bridge and into Kilkenny.

At one time they seemed to have won the day, and they would have won it, could their leaders have restrained them in victory. But they turned uncontrollably to plunder and incendiarism and whisky, and discipline resumed its superiority. Behind the river the broken troops again formed. Johnstone led them back to the charge; and the rebels, now scattered, were driven back in turn at the bayonet's point. The guns were recovered, and again began to work havoc in the disordered crowds. The carnage was now dreadful. No quarter had been given by the rebels at the beginning of the engagement; none was allowed them at the end of it. They were driven out through the gate at which they had entered. They attempted a stand within the lines where they first appeared in the morning. Johnstone stormed in upon them and broke them. There Lord Mountjoy's body was found, far from the place where he had fallen, 'mangled and butchered in the most horrid manner.' Mountjoy was the Luke Gardiner of '82, who had wrung from the Protestant Parliament the first concessions to the Catholics, and this was his



reward.<sup>1</sup> The sight of their commander thus barbarously mutilated drove the Dublin regiment to fury. Three gentlemen had been murdered near Ross the day before with peculiar brutality. The militia generally had behaved excellently in action, but when the fighting was over could no longer be restrained. Major Vesey says, 'The carnage was now shocking; the troops were exasperated, and could not be stopped.' The scene became too hideous 'to be represented.' The battle had raged for eleven hours. It began at four in the morning. At three in the afternoon, when it was at last over, Vesey estimated the rebel bodies which lay strewed round him as at least two thousand. Musgrave, on further inquiry, palced the number of those who were killed in the fight and after it at two thousand six hundred.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The usual story is that Mountjoy was killed at Three Bullet Gate. Major Vesey, who was present, and whose account of the battle I chiefly follow, says that Mountjoy was wounded and taken prisoner early in the morning, and that he himself saw the body, 'mangled' as I have described, a mile from the gate where he fell, when the rebels' last position was stormed. He was fifty-three years

old when killed; his name attaching itself to living memories through his son, or rather through his son's second wife, Lady Blessington, of West-End notoriety.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the accounts of the battle in Musgrave, Gordon, and Hay with the despatches of General Johnstone, Major Vesey, and Colonel Crawford, in the State Paper Office.

## SECTION VI.

MAJOR VESEY, gazing on the field at Ross, inquired 'if there could be a curse too heavy for the wretches who had brought on Ireland so horrible a war?' Six miles distant there was at that moment another spectacle, of which he was as yet ignorant, still more dreadful than the scene which he was witnessing. 1798

It will be remembered that when encamped at Carrickbyrne the rebels had seized many of the Protestants of the neighbourhood, and had shut them up in Captain King's house, at Scullabogue. A hundred and eighty-four of them, chiefly old men, women, and children, who had been taken because they were too helpless to escape, were confined in a barn thirty-four feet long and fifteen wide.<sup>1</sup> From thirty to forty others were kept in the dwelling-house. With the party in the barn were sixteen Catholics, wives and children of the hated North Cork men, who had fallen somewhere into the insurgents' hands. When the rebel army advanced from Carrickbyrne to Corbet Hill, the day before the battle, the prisoners were left

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hay gives the dimensions. He shows that there was barely standing-room for a hundred and eighty-four persons in such a space, and therefore boldly throws aside the evidence of persons present, and reduces the number to eighty. It will be seen that he has involuntarily established the fact which he believed he was disproving.

under charge of John Murphy, of Loughnageer, with a guard of three hundred men. At the first check in the street of New Ross a party of rebels, who were cowards as well as savages, turned their backs and ran. Before nine in the morning<sup>1</sup> they came panting to the door of Scullabogue, declaring that the day was lost, and that they had brought orders for the prisoners to be put to death, as they might otherwise be dangerous. The officer of the guard hesitated, but a commission was produced, signed by a priest,<sup>2</sup> which was accepted at last as sufficient authority. Those who were in the house were at once brought out and shot on the lawn.<sup>3</sup> The standers-by stabbed them as they

<sup>1</sup> 'The massacre began in the forenoon. See Richard Grandy's evidence.'—*Musgrave*, Appendix xx. 7. The hour is important; for Hay, while he affects to deplore and condemn the atrocities at Scullabogue, attributes them, as usual, to the carnage which followed the battle at Ross. 'The fugitives from Ross,' he says, 'communicating accounts of the tortures practised there, and that no quarter would be given to the people, an infinite multitude of men and women rushed to Scullabogue and forced the guards. General Johnstone was blamed, for he was warned to spare the people, or they would resort to retaliation. If giving quarter would have prevented the fatality at Scullabogue, humanity excites a wish it had been

given.' Mr. Hay claims more than the permitted license of a partisan when he explains what happened at nine in the morning at Scullabogue as the result of the behaviour of the troops at Ross at three in the afternoon.

<sup>2</sup> 'Father Murphy, of Taghmon.'—*Musgrave*, vol. i. p. 530.

<sup>3</sup> 'Thirty-four were killed in this way. . . Two brothers were among them, one of whom was married. The wife knelt between her husband and her brother-in-law, holding a hand of each, and praying to be allowed to share their fate. Captain Murphy's scruples obliged him to refuse. "Such a horrid deed," he said, "would make the Virgin Mary blush."—*Musgrave*, vol. i. p. 529.

fell with their pikes, and licked the blood from the points.<sup>1</sup> Captain Murphy interpreted his orders to extend only to his male prisoners. The rabble who surrounded him were not so easily satisfied. While the bodies on the lawn were being stripped for burial a party of the wretches rushed for the barn. The miserable beings who had been pent up there through a summer's afternoon and night must have been in a condition in which death would be a relief to most of them. Humanity may perhaps hope that till their murder was resolved on they were allowed the range of the yard. In the barn, they were, at any rate, at that moment crushed so close together that their bodies supported each other, and they could neither sit nor lie on the ground. The doors were barred on the outside, and the rebels with their pikes thrust blazing faggots into the thatch. The majority must have been instantly suffocated. Those who were near the walls sought chinks and cracks for air, but were driven back by pike-points thrust into the openings. One little child crawled under the door and was escaping; a rebel ran a pike into it as a peasant runs a pitchfork into a cornsheaf, and tossed it back into the flames. A woman who came four days later to look for the remains of her husband and son found the

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<sup>1</sup> 'One witness, who was present, swore to this.'—*Musgrave*, had himself a narrow escape of death, confirmed it privately to *Musgrave*.  
Appendix xx. 7. Another, who

ruins of the barn full of blackened bodies, 'all in a standing posture'—an unintended confirmation of the received estimate of the number of those who perished there.

For this act the Irish Catholics have affected the same inadequate penitence with which they at once deny and excuse the massacre of 1641. They cut down the dimensions of their crime in defiance of evidence, and explain what remains as the consequence of the cruelties of their adversaries. They fail to recognise that, alike in 1641 and in 1798, no injury had been done to them, and no hurt had been designed against them, till they had either taken arms in rebellion or were preparing for it so openly that the Government was compelled to take their weapons from them. The burglar who kills a policeman is none the less held guilty of murder because the policeman began the quarrel by laying his hand upon his shoulder.

Bagenal Harvey, the nominal commander of the detachment which fought at New Ross, received the news of the massacre at Scullabogue with horror and indignation. He swore that he would shoot any man in future who murdered a prisoner. It was seen instantly that he was not the man to be a leader in an Irish rebellion. The rebels assured him with a howl that they would bear no dictation from a Protestant and a landowner. Father Roche, his lieutenant, preaching a sermon on the defeat at Ross, and endeavouring to explain it, said they would have either

grace nor luck while there was a Protestant in their ranks. Bagenal Harvey was deposed for his interference, and returned to Wexford, better enlightened as to the nature of the people whom he had been so eager to emancipate.

## SECTION VII.

AFTER the disaster which befell Walpole, Dublin became with difficulty manageable. Father John  
 1798 promised to be at Bray, with 50,000 men, by the 12th or 13th of June at latest. Letters from the North were less and less assuring, and there was still the same appearance of apathy in England. Though the rebels had been defeated at New Ross, they had shown fighting qualities entirely unexpected. There was no sign and no promise of the so anxiously demanded reinforcements; and so dark was the prospect, that Lady Camden and many other ladies were sent off to Holyhead, to be out of the way of the scenes which were now probably imminent.

On the 9th of June Camden again endeavoured to open Portland's eyes. 'You will be much deceived, he said, 'if you imagine a rebellion which has been so long in preparing, which is fomented by party spirit and religious animosity, can be speedily put down. The struggle will be violent and bloody, and will shake the connection between the two countries.'<sup>1</sup> Camden thought the Ministry infatuated. The Ministry knew by this time the extent of the danger, but they were in greater difficulties than Camden was aware of. The Irish Protestants since '82 had not deserved the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Camden to Portland, June 9.' S.P.O.

confidence of England, and they did not possess it. O'Connor's acquittal had created an impression in England that the story of the conspiracy was untrue. The impression which prevailed on the state of Ireland was that a bitterly wronged peasantry had attempted by constitutional means to rescue themselves from their oppressors. In return they had been lashed, pitch-capped, tortured, till they had been driven into arms to protect themselves from atrocious tyranny, and England was now called on to send troops and shoot down those who resisted, and restore the rest to their taskmasters. Every charge against the Protestant Yeomanry received ready credit; every cruel act which was really committed, and a hundred others which were never committed, were trumpeted abroad till nothing else could be heard. The Protestant gentry were doubtless not innocent. They had been careless and dissipated as landlords. They had behaved in Parliament like an assembly of idiots. England, too, had her share of guilt for the condition to which Ireland had fallen, though in her impatience it pleased her not to remember it. She saw the faults of the Protestant gentry: she forgot her own.

Nor could the English mind comprehend how a Jacobin conspiracy could have converted itself into a Popish insurrection. Protestant bigotry might please to call the rebellion Catholic. So far as it was real, it originated in an attempt to assert the principles of the sovereignty of the people. If the means were too violent, the object was laudable. The great Whig



statesmen had for years described the disorders of Ireland as the aggravated results of despotism. In consequence every difficulty was thrown in the way of sending assistance to Camden. The Cabinet might know that Camden was right, but they were still unable to produce evidence which would convince the world, and the world remained stubbornly incredulous.

'I do not wonder,' wrote Wickham to Edward Cooke, on the 1st of July, 'that the indignation you speak of in Dublin should have increased and be increasing. The conduct of certain individuals on this occasion<sup>1</sup> is most extraordinary and unaccountable. They will live to be sorry for what they have done.'<sup>2</sup>

Every day was bringing to the private knowledge of the Cabinet how widely the mischief had spread as the correspondence which continued with Lord Downshire's friend added to the list of accomplices. Lord Cloncurry's son was no sooner arrested than Stewart of Acton, a young Agar, a young Tranent, young Curran, McGuchin, Dowdall, and twenty others whose names never came before the public, were found to be as deeply compromised as he.

'We know by our private accounts,' said Portland, 'that all these persons are more or less implicated. There are papers found in Mr. Lawless's possession that tend directly to show his connection with some of the most desperate of the Republican party in

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<sup>1</sup> He was perhaps referring to that there was no occasion to send Abercrombie, who had told Portland, after his return to England, more troops to Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> *Irish MSS.* S.P.O.

England, as well as with those who are in habitual communication with the French agents at Hamburg; 'and yet,' he continued, 'under present circumstances, and with evidence of the nature of that of which the Government here is in possession, strong and decisive as it is, none of these persons can be brought to trial *without exposing secrets of the last importance to the State, the revealing of which may implicate the safety of the two kingdoms.*'<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the explanation of the difficulties of the Government did not help Camden. The check at Ross had for the present saved Waterford and Kilkenny. Colonel L'Estrange had blocked the road into Kildare, but Arklow was ungarrisoned; on that side the approaches to Dublin were uncovered; and if Father John reached Bray with as large a force as he promised, it was quite certain that a bloody and desperate insurrection would break out in Dublin itself.

At all hazards it was necessary to defend the passage at Arklow. The handful of men who were left there when Loftus advanced had retired, with a crowd of Gorey Protestants, to Wicklow. Major Hardy, who was in command in Wicklow, sent them back to their post, without so much as allowing them to rest and eat. The Dublin loyalists raised four thousand additional Yeomanry among themselves, that the rest of the troops might be made available. General

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<sup>1</sup> 'Portland to Camden, June 8.' S.P.O.

Needham reached Arklow on the 6th of June, with a regiment of Cavan Militia. He gathered up the wreck of Walpole's men, which were drifting about unowned, reorganised the rest of the garrison, and armed a few additional Volunteers and Yeomen. With all Needham's efforts, however, the force in Arklow remained inferior to that which had so hardly defended New Ross; while Father John's rebel division was equal, if not superior, to that under Bagenal Harvey and Father Roche, and Father John had as yet succeeded in all that he had tried. Had he come on to Arklow at once, with as much promptitude as he had shown at Enniscorthy and Wexford, he would easily have overwhelmed Needham. Happily, he lingered on the road, burning Protestants' houses; and at midnight, between the 8th and 9th of June, three hundred men belonging to the Durham Fencibles arrived under Colonel Skerritt. The Durham was the most distinguished regiment in Ireland. When it was called out of Ulster for service in Wexford the rebels were so conscious of its value that they placed an ambush of 7,000 men at Balbriggan, in Meath, to intercept and destroy it. Skerritt brought his men safely through. They reached Dublin on the 8th, and were despatched to Arklow at once on jaunting-cars, carts, and carriages, to gain time and bring them fresh to the scene.

With the addition of the Durham, Needham's force was raised to 1,600 men; of these a hundred and twenty were the survivors of Sir Watkin Wynn's Ancient

Britons; the rest consisted of eight hundred Irish Militiamen, three hundred Arklow Yeomanry, a hundred Scotch regulars, and the Durham.

Arklow stands at the mouth of the Avoca, which run down out of the Wicklow hills and there falls into the sea. At Arklow the river is crossed by a bridge, over which passed the only road available for a large body of men from Wexford into Wicklow.

The Avoca was fordable higher up, but the tracks were bad, the hills steep, the route in that direction practically impossible. Over Arklow bridge lay Father John's way, if he meant to reach Dublin. He had loitered about Carnew, and it was not till the morning of the 9th that he again set out in earnest. Strategy would have suggested the despatch of a certain number of men by the mountain-road to turn Needham's position, while he himself attacked in front. Hitherto Father John had been skilful with operations of this kind; but he was confident in his numbers. Success, perhaps, persuaded him that in a holy war the supernatural powers were on his side. He believed that he had a charmed life, and the extraordinary career of a Catholic curate starting up suddenly as the general of a victorious army had intoxicated him. According to the moderate estimate of Mr. Gordon he had twenty-seven thousand men with him (Musgrave says thirty-one thousand). Of these five thousand had muskets and fowling-pieces. He had the guns which he took at Three Rocks, and the artillerymen whom he had saved to serve them. His huge masses had already shown

that, under the double inspiration of religion and patriotism, they were more than an armed mob, and had taught experienced officers to respect their resolution.

They approached Arklow on the afternoon of the 9th of June. They formed at the outskirts in three  
1798 large columns, each company with its own green flag, with the harp in the centre. The right wing advanced along the shore road, which enters the town by the sands at the mouth of the river. The left swung round upon the road from Gorey, which passes through the middle of the town near the water side. The centre poured down into the gardens, fields, and wooded enclosures which cover the slope at the back of the houses between the two roads, the whole body thus forming one vast semicircle.

So earnest were the rebels in their religious observances that they had halted at every mile of their march to hear mass. It was five in the afternoon before scouts brought word that they were coming on in earnest. But at midsummer there were still five hours of daylight, and on the use made of those hours depended the present fate of Dublin.

Needham's position was simple. Skerritt and the Durhams, with a party of Antrim Militia, under Colonel O'Hara, and three six-pounders, held the Gorey road. A barricade of carts and cars had been extemporised in the street, and the men were thrown out on either side of it, sheltered among the hedges and cabins. The Yeomanry and remaining militia were

divided. Two companies, with another gun, covered the back of the town. The rest, with a fifth gun, were posted at the angle between the bridge and the sea. A squadron of dragoons was across the bridge out of shot-range, on the Wicklow side of the river, to be used as occasion might serve. The fight began on the sea side. The right column of the rebels came plunging along the sands; the green banners waving, the priests with pistols and crucifixes; the Irish cry rising and falling in fitful cadences like the swell and scream of an Æolian harp. They had no cattle with them, but trusted to their own courage; as at Ross, with their first rush they drove the soldiers back, and fired a row of fishermen's cabins at the end of the street. A piquet of Ancient Britons had to gallop through the flames in retreating, and, unable to reach the bridge, swam their horses through the river. The road turns at a right angle as it reaches the town. As the rebels rounded the corner they were received with a fire which staggered them and drove them back. They formed again and again. They fought their way desperately to the bridge-foot, recoiled, and again advanced, but could never pass that point. On their last retreat the dragoons were let loose on them and cut them down as they scattered among the sand hills.

The attack on the Gorey road was more determined and the fighting far more severe. Father Michael Murphy and his brother priests here distinguished themselves. Political lay conspirators in Ireland have been magnificent on the platform, but have been

uniformly found wanting in the field. The courage of their opinions was in the Catholic peasantry and their natural chiefs, the clergy. The battery behind the barricade completely swept the road. Twice the priests led on their followers, over the bodies of their falling comrades, through musket-shot and round-shot and grape, to the very mouths of the guns, the leaders coming so close that they shot the gunners at their posts with their pistols. Twice they failed; the second time with such desperate loss, that they wavered and sought shelter among the walls. Father Michael seized a standard with a blazoned cross upon it and a motto of 'Liberty or death.' Conspicuous on horseback, he dashed out amidst the shot, and dragged from his pocket a handful of balls which he swore that he had caught as they reached him. 'Come on, boys,' he cried, 'the heretic bullets can never hurt you. You are fighting for your God and Holy Church.'

A third time they charged till they again touched the barricade. With a contempt of death which was really admirable, they seemed determined to take the guns, though every other man might fall in doing it, when a round-shot, against which Father Michael's spells could not avail, caught him and his horse and hurled them into ruin. Sullenly and slowly the rebels then drew back, leaving the ground covered with their dead. Even yet they might have tried once more; but it grew dark, and night rather than defeat ended an engagement more desperate than even the battle of New Ross.

## SECTION VIII.

NEEDHAM reported that he had held his ground. He could say no more; and he added that he expected to be attacked again with thrice the <sup>1798</sup> number of assailants.<sup>1</sup> At the same moment Camden learnt that the blow which he most feared had fallen, and that the North was in arms. The insurrection in Ulster was in fact confined to the heated centres of philosophical republicanism, where the United Irish spirit had been grafted on the discontent generated by landlord evictions and the long injustice to the Presbyterians. That it would be limited to this area Camden could not possibly foresee. In the eyes of the Established Church, Dissenters still remained the enemy which Ireland had most cause to fear; and the absurd prejudice which might have gone far to realise the Churchmen's alarms, had the Catholics been more prudent in concealing their real purpose, still powerfully influenced the atmosphere of Dublin Castle. A meeting of magistrates was called at Antrim, on the 7th of June, to devise measures for the security of the county. The United Irish Committee saw an opportunity of destroying the leading country gentlemen at a single blow, and, under the impulse of Samuel Orr, the brother of Orr who had been hanged, concluded that

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<sup>1</sup> 'General Needham to General Lake, June 10.' S.P.O.



Antrim should rise when the magistrates were in session there.

The plot was formed, and was executed. Lord O'Neil, who had made himself peculiarly hated by the Jacobin zealots, was killed, and a squadron of dragoons was almost annihilated. But there the success ended. Another regiment which had been sent for arrived opportunely, and the Antrim insurrection was quelled at its first appearance.

The example spread. On Thursday, the 10th, a party of rebels attacked and carried Newtown Ardes. Colonel Stapleton was driven out with severe loss, and was obliged to take refuge in Belfast.<sup>1</sup> The detached companies which lay in exposed situations were called in and concentrated. The utmost hope of General Nugent, whom Lake had left in command, was to confine the movement to the two counties of Antrim and Down.

General Nugent was agreeably disappointed. The massacre at Scullabogue was worth fifty regiments for the pacification of Ulster. It was not for an Irish nationality headed by the priests, for another 1641, for a war of creeds and races in which the Catholics of the South were to pike and shoot and burn till every Protestant had been destroyed out of the land, that the Presbyterians of the North had joined in a

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<sup>1</sup> 'Colonel Stapleton's loss has been very severe. Many officers and men killed and wounded.'— 'General Nugent to General Lake, June 10.' S.P.O.

conspiracy for Irish independence. Thousands who had hung back and hesitated now joined the Orange ranks. Thousands followed of those who had quaffed toasts to the heroes of the Bastille at the revolutionary banquets of Belfast. Rebellion in Ulster drifted away to its special home and nursery—the estate of Lord Moira at Ballinahinch. Distrust spread among the remaining adherents of the cause. Two thousand Catholics discovered the companionship of heretics to be sacrilege, and deserted, and the remnant of the once so dangerous Jacobin combination fought and lost their last battle in Lord Moira's park, on the 13th. Five hundred insurgents were killed, and the Presbyterians of Ulster, whose wrongs at bottom were more cruel than those of any other section of the Irish nation, fell back into the place which befitted the descendants of the defenders of Derry, the worst rewarded but the most loyal to the connection between the two islands of all branches of the Irish community.

This happy consequence could not have been anticipated when Nugent reported the loss of Newtown Ardes. Lord Camden felt deeply indignant at the want of support from England. The Irish Protestant gentry were suspected of desiring to exterminate the Catholics. Innocent before the agitation for Emancipation commenced of the faintest emotion of animosity against the people, the Irish gentry were being fast taught that in extermination lay their only hope of preserving their own lives. On them, so long as the Presbyterians held aloof, the weight had fallen

of encountering the rebellion. They were called on to defend Ireland. They were doing their duty gallantly, and were abused and maligned for doing it. Well intending, but with a profound ignorance of the nature of the Irish people, Mr. Pitt and Dundas had excited hopes which they were unable to realise. The Catholics had seen their expected ascendancy taken from them when it was almost their own. In revenge they had conspired an insurrection which was following step for step the pattern of 1641. The Irish gentry, after braving assassination for seven years, were now set upon with the ferocious instincts which had inspired Phelim O'Neil and Roger Moore. They forgot the share of their own foolish Parliament in provoking the crisis. They saw only that England was the immediate cause of it, and that England was now leaving them to defend themselves and their families from murder, and to preserve Ireland to the British connection.

The war was in consequence becoming savage. When a small minority are contending with the overwhelming numbers of an enemy which is aiming at their annihilation, war is always savage. A hundred men fighting against a thousand cannot afford to make prisoners. Those who find no quarter give no quarter. The Irish Yeomanry were accused of confounding the innocent with the guilty. When the innocent will take no part against the guilty, when eye-witnesses will give no evidence against murderers, when juries will not convict, when an entire population—to the

very groom and valet of the magistrate who is marked for assassination—are in league either to assist at his death or to conceal the actors in it, at such a time it is impossible that the gradations of crime should be accurately measured by men so harassed, so excited, so cruelly judged, so unjustly dealt with.

After hearing of the loss of Newtown Ardes, Camden felt that unless the state of Ireland was to become a disgrace to the civilised world the Cabinet must be compelled to exert themselves. He sent over his private secretary, Mr. Elliott, to explain the circumstances of a situation which might resolve itself any day into some appalling catastrophe. A letter of which Elliott was the bearer shows how honourably and how profoundly Camden felt his own responsibilities :

‘Unless a fresh force is sent immediately you may be assured the country will be lost, and will not be gained again to his Majesty’s Crown except by a reconquest. I cannot conceive from what circumstances his Majesty’s Ministers can have imagined that this rebellion can be easily crushed. Mr. Elliott will communicate to you the religious frenzy which agitates the rebels in Wexford: that they are headed by their priests, that they halt every half mile to pray, that they are taught to consider that they are fighting for their religion, that their enthusiasm is most alarming. He will inform your Grace how violently agitated Protestant feeling is in Ireland at this moment, and with how rapid strides the war is becoming one of the most cruel and bloody that has ever disgraced or been im-

posed upon a country. He will explain to your Grace how impolitic and unwise it would be to refuse the offer of Protestants to enter into Yeomanry and other corps, and yet how dangerous any encouragement to the Orange spirit is while the army is composed of Catholics, as the militia almost generally is. Neither present and most imminent danger, nor further embarrassment, can be removed but by an immediate landing of very large bodies of troops from England. Every portion of the kingdom is infected with the poison of disaffection. If the rebels, assisted by the French, possess themselves of it, the immediate danger to England will be obvious. The rebel force at Wexford is too strong to be attacked at present. The North has risen. Dublin is in immediate danger of insurrection, and the troops cannot be moved.’<sup>1</sup>

Equally interesting and equally instructive is a letter from Lord Castlereagh to Mr. Wickham, written on the following day. The Cabinet had not waited for Elliott, and had roused themselves at last. The mail, on the evening of the 11th, brought word that the Guards were on their way, and that other regiments were preparing to follow.

‘The intelligence,’ Castlereagh said, ‘is most welcome. It is of importance that the authority of England should decide this contest, as well with a view to British influence in Ireland as to make it unnecessary for the Government to lend itself too much

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Camden to Portland, June 11. Abridged.’ S.P.O.

to a party in this country—a party highly exasperated by the religious persecution to which the Protestants in Wexford have been exposed. In that county it is perfectly a religious frenzy. The priests lead the rebels to battle. As they march they kneel and pray, and show the most desperate resolution in their attacks. The enclosed certificate is curious,<sup>1</sup> as marking the complexion of the rebellion in that quarter. They put such Protestants as are reported to be Orangemen to death, saving others on condition of their embracing the Catholic faith. It is a Jacobinical conspiracy throughout the country, pursuing its objects with Popish instruments, the heated bigotry of their sect being better suited to the purpose of the Republican leaders than the cold reasoning disaffection of the Northern Presbyterians. The number of the insurgents is immense—so great as to make it prudent to assemble in very considerable force before an attempt is made to penetrate that very difficult and enclosed county. The conduct of the Militia and Yeomanry has exceeded our most sanguine expectations. A very few of the Yeomanry have been corrupted, but in no instance have the Militia failed to show the most determined spirit.’<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘I recommend to your protection, for Christ’s sake, the bearer hereof, who has voluntarily embraced the Roman Catholic religion, and received the sacraments thereof, who is no Orangeman.—  
Lachen, June 1.  
‘RAYMOND ROCHE, P.P.’  
<sup>2</sup> ‘Castlereagh to Wickham, June 12. Abridged.’ S.P.O.

## SECTION IX.

SOME days had yet to elapse before the troops could arrive, and the Protestants of Wexford were  
 1798 meanwhile at the mercy of the insurgents. The reverse at New Ross put an end to the good humour which at first had prevailed in the city. Scenes of blood now became frequent. Each day bands of rebels paraded the streets with drums and bagpipes, recovering heretics to the faith, and piking and shooting those who refused to be converted; Protestant prisoners being told off to be the executioners of their fellows, as a preparation for their own deaths. The desire to convert was perfectly sincere; no less determined the resolution to punish the obstinate unbelievers. The Catholic clergy in the town did not encourage ferocity; the Catholic bishop, so far as was consistent with his own security, opposed the bloody method of working conversion. One priest, in a scene to be presently described, succeeded in preventing murder by risking boldly his own life. What one could do others might have done, had they been equally brave, and the reproach cast upon their order by the doings of Father John and his companions might have been redeemed or washed away. It was, perhaps, too much to expect. The bishops and clergy of the Catholic Church would have been more than mortal had they not desired the success of a rebellion which would have restored Ireland to the faith, and they did not care to come to

an open rupture with men whose fault was but excess of zeal. When the penitents were brought to their chapels they received them with enthusiasm, exhibited them to their congregations in triumph, and exulted from their pulpits over the victory of truth. The 3rd of June was Trinity Sunday. Father Roche, the bishop's chaplain, preached on the enormity of heresy. On the 10th the same reverend gentleman dilated on the penal laws. He condemned the murder of their oppressors, but he exhorted his hearers to be bold in the field of battle, as became the soldiers of Christ. The rebels took such part of his advice as pleased them, and forgot the rest. Keogh, whom they had made governor, was powerless. He was a Protestant, and himself in hourly danger. The hero of the hour in Wexford was Dixon, the shipowner, who had brought back the escaping heretics. Another prisoner had been since captured of unexpected consequence. Lord Kingsborough, Earl of Kingston afterwards, was colonel of the North Cork Militia. He was in Dublin when the insurrection broke out, and he hurried off to join his regiment. Finding when he arrived at Arklow that he could not approach Wexford by land, he took a boat, with two of his officers, and went down the coast to enter from the sea. The town had risen meanwhile. Lord Kingsborough was taken at the mouth of the river, and was detained for the present as a hostage should fortune turn.

It was at Vinegar Hill that 'Irish ideas' were to be seen completely in the ascendant. There, although



converts were made, it was not always to save life in this world. To be a Protestant was to be an Orangeman. To be an Orangeman was to be an enemy of Ireland. The day after the battle of New Ross a batch of prisoners was carried out from Wexford Gaol to Vinegar Hill, and piked in front of the windmill. Day by day other gangs of victims were dragged from their hiding-places in the neighbourhood, carried before the permanent tribunal, and by them handed over to the executioners. From the 29th of May and onwards these bloody scenes continued without intermission. Every day saw its allotment of prisoners before the judges. Every day saw its half-dozen or dozen of them delivered over to the assassins who sprinkled with holy water executed the sentence on the enemies of Ireland and the Church. One poor wretch who was piked imperfectly, survived to describe the scene. He was brought out with thirteen others after half an hour's confinement in the windmill. He was asked in what religion he would die. He said he would die a Protestant, as he was born. 'You bloody Orange thief,' said one of the executioners, 'you are damned, and will go to hell when we put the life out of you.' He was stabbed in the body and the neck, his clothes were torn from him, and he lay in a pile of bleeding bodies till consciousness returned, when he contrived to crawl into a ditch, where he lay till dusk, and then escaped.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Musgrave*, Appendix, xix.

Father John, while he remained on the hill, had his intervals of compunction. After a scene of this kind he called some of the prisoners not yet condemned before him to harangue them into penitence. 'You sons of Belial,' he said, cracking his fingers at them, 'will you withstand our holy religion, which existed eight hundred years before yours began? You see how our pikemen will treat you, unless there is great reformation in you.'<sup>1</sup>

'This is the handiwork of God,' said a Catholic of Enniscorthy, attempting to console the wife of a Protestant clergyman whose husband had been murdered. 'There must be but one religion on the face of the earth. Father John catches red-hot bullets in his hand.' A rebel named Beaghan, who was one of the murderers on Vinegar Hill, and was executed a year later, on the scene of his crimes, declared that what he had done had been by order of his superiors. He said that before the rebellion Catholics and Protestants had lived peaceably together, and for himself he had always found the Protestants better masters and more indulgent landlords than those of his own religion. But after the insurrection broke out every Protestant was called an Orangeman, and every one of them was to be killed, to the poorest man in the country. Even when the people were put down he declared that he never heard one of them express sorrow for what they had done. If they

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<sup>1</sup> 'Deposition of Richard Sterne.'—*Musgrave*, Appendix, xix.

were sorry at all, it was because when the power was in their hands they had not made cleaner work. 'Remember what I tell you,' he said, as his last word before he was hanged. 'If you Protestants are ever in the power of the Catholics again, as they are now in yours, they will not leave any of you alive. Even those who campaigned with them, if things had gone well, would in the end have been killed. I have heard them say so many times.'

Thus through the first weeks of June, the rebels after their manner were fighting the battle of Christ. To have killed three Protestants was counted a passport into heaven. One day after an execution there was a thunderstorm; and a humorous spectator observed that 'God was sounding his horn because an Orangeman was killed.' The victims were generally men, but wives were allowed to support their husbands at their death, and more than one poor woman went mad at what she had witnessed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Confession of James Beaghan, executed on Vinegar Hill, August 24, 1799.'—*Musgrave*, Appendix, xix. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Women were sometimes killed by their own sex. A Protestant, named Joseph Dale, lived with his wife in the town of Kildare. On the rebellion breaking out there, on the 24th of May, Patrick Dowling, the insurgent leader, sent for Dale, and told him that he and his wife should die unless they went with the people. Dale was fright-

ened, joined Dowling's band, and marched to Athy. As soon as he was gone, Mary Dowling, Patrick's wife, gathered the women of the place about her, and proposed 'to go and kill Catherine Dale, the Orange whore.' Two of her daughters, another woman, named Elizabeth Byrne, James Byrne, Elizabeth's son, a lad of sixteen, and some other boys, went off to Dale's house. They found the poor woman with a Prayer-book in her hand. They knocked her

All things have their appointed times, and so had the horrors of Vinegar Hill. For a hundred years the English and Irish Protestants had been affecting to govern Ireland. They had not governed Ireland. They had left it to ignorance and misery. The funds which should have provided schools had been squandered on royal mistresses and bastards. The Church had been sacrificed to political corruption. The Calvinist colonies of the South had dwindled and disappeared for want of teachers. The Presbyterians and Wesleyans, who would have supplied them with ministers, had been frowned on by the gentry and persecuted by the bishops, and now the bill was presented for payment, and the debt had to be washed out in the blood of innocents. For three weeks the murdering continued, and then deliverance came. The Guards arrived in the middle of June, and Lake found himself able to advance without risk of further failure. A combined movement was again arranged. Additional troops were sent to Dundas at Naas; to Needham at Arklow; to Johnstone at New Ross; to Loftus at Carlow, to which he had retired. On the 16th of June Dundas was ordered to cross the Slaney at Tullow and advance to Carnew, where on the 18th

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<p>down with the handle of a churn. Elizabeth Byrne dragged her out into the road. The women collected pebbles in their aprons, and the boys stoned her to death. These women were tried and con-</p>	<p>victed at the Spring Assizes at Naas, 1801. Two of the boys gave evidence; and being asked by the Judge why they had joined in the murder, answered quietly, 'Because she was a Protestant.'</p>
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he was to be joined by Loftus. On the 19th, at three in the morning, Needham was directed to push forward from Arklow to Gorey, when he would be on a level with Dundas and Loftus. On the same 19th the orders to Johnstone were to drive the rebels in from Carrickbyrne, sending parties out north to see that none of them doubled back between New Ross and Carnew. These officers would thus be moving in from different points in a circle of which Vinegar Hill was the centre. To prevent an escape south into Waterford, General Moore was directed at the same time to advance from Duncannon, cross Waterford Harbour at Ballyhack Passage, and proceed thence along the Wexford road as far as Foulk's Mill, at the back of Forth Mountain. Father John had returned, after the defeat at Arklow, to Vinegar Hill. The rebel force was between Carrickbyrne, Vinegar Hill, and Three Rocks. Moore would hold the road to Waterford; Johnstone the road to Kilkenny; Loftus, Dundas, and Needham the roads into Carlow and Wicklow. Wexford Harbour was blockaded, and escape by sea was impossible. The five columns, gradually converging, would force the rebels into a mass, and thus it might be hoped extinguish them.

The orders were executed without mistake and without resistance. Lake himself accompanied Dundas as Commander-in-Chief, the entire force at his disposition amounting to 13,000 men. On the 20th the circle was to be contracted further. Dundas and Lake were to descend on both sides of the Slaney

to a point three miles above Enniscorthy, Loftus to make for the same point from Carnew. Needham was to advance to Oulart, Johnstone to Ballymackerey, half-way between Enniscorthy and Carrickbyrne, and Moore to Taghmon. Vinegar Hill could then be attacked on three sides at daybreak on the 21st. The Wexford road only would be left open for the rebels' retreat, and at Wexford they would be surrounded, and must surrender at discretion.

The insurgent chiefs had misinterpreted the inaction of the Government. The failure of the first attempt to penetrate the county had persuaded them that at home they were irresistible, and they were almost surrounded before they were aware of their danger. Johnstone's advance on Carrickbyrne first opened their eyes. The last hope for them was to stop Moore, sweep round from Three Rocks in Johnstone's rear, and seize New Ross in his absence. On the 19th of June, when Johnstone's column was seen approaching Carrickbyrne, Father Roche mounted his horse and rode at full speed to Wexford. He called on every man who could handle a pike to follow him, and with the force at Three Rocks marched through the night to look for Moore. He fell in with him on the afternoon of the 20th, as he was coming out of Foulk's Mill. Father Roche's men fought gallantly, and with real discipline and skill. They displayed in excess the same singular religious passion which had throughout distinguished the movement. They knelt so often in the action to pray, that even

the priests at last swore at them and used their horse-whips. It was not cowardice, however, but the profound superstition which is the master-spirit of the Irish peasant's heart, and is the source alike of his crimes and his virtues. The rebels behaved none the worse for their prayers, nor for the prayers of the thousands of old men and women who on their knees along the roads and in the village streets were entreating the Virgin Mary to help them. At one time they had almost gained the day. They gave way only at eight in the evening, when their powder failed them. They had then inflicted more loss than they had sustained, and they fell back to Three Rocks in good order. Moore had fought the battle with but a part of his force. The remaining division coming up after the action, he pushed on at once to Taghmon, where he learnt news which led him to press forward to Wexford without waiting for further instructions.

I would have been well for the Catholic cause had Father Roche succeeded in carrying the town rabble with him, as he had intended. A few only obeyed the call. Dixon and the crew of scoundrels who followed him hung back and kept out of sight. They had other work in view. The news that the army was advancing had made them savage, like wolves at bay. On the same 20th of June, when Lake was coming down the Slaney, and Roche was engaged with Moore at Foulk's Mill, a column of pikemen crossed Wexford Bridge into the town, carrying a black banner, with a red cross upon it, which they planted on the Custom-

House Quay. Drink was there served out to them, and the cry was then 'To the gaol!' where three hundred Protestant prisoners had been lying for three weeks. A court of justice was extemporised in a public billiard-room, where Dixon, the shipowner, presided. The prisoners were brought one by one before him. Only a single question was asked—Could it be shown that any one act, which in the estimation of the court could be called good, had been done by the person at the bar? If no witness came forward the sentence was immediate death. The prisoner was passed over to the rebels outside, and, surrounded by a yelling mob, in which there were more women than men, he was led out upon the bridge. There, stripped naked, he was placed on his knees in the middle of the road. Two pikemen stood in front of him and two behind. They knelt, said a prayer, then levelling their pikes, rose and ran upon him, held him aloft for a moment, writhing on their points, and pitched him over the parapet into the stream. In this way through that midsummer-day ninety-seven men, whose crime was to be of the Protestant religion—country gentlemen, magistrates, tradesmen, merchants, clergymen—were ceremoniously and deliberately murdered. During the afternoon Dixon, weary of his functions in the billiard-room, left the judicial work to others, and sate on horseback with his wife watching the executions. The day wore on. At seven in the evening a fresh batch of victims had been brought out, and were in position waiting their turn for death, when Father Corrin, a



Catholic priest, but none the less a noble-minded man, threw himself in the way of the murderers, denounced their infernal work, and insisted that it should end. Throughout the day the Catholic clergy had been invisible. Dr. Caulfield, the bishop, declared afterwards that he was ignorant of what was going forward till it was over. If the bishop was ignorant, other priests must have been too well informed; yet none of them interfered but Father Corrin, and he, perhaps, would have failed and been thrust aside. But at that instant an express came in to say that the battle was going ill at Foulk's Mill, that Vinegar Hill was beset, and that every man who was able to fight was needed in the field. The mob skulked away to their dens, as if they already saw the bayonets of the avengers. The prisoners on the bridge, who had taken leave of life, remained on their knees, unconscious of what was passing round them. The guard by and by returned and carried them back to gaol, telling them that they were respited for the night; the next day neither man, woman, nor child among the Protestants should be spared.<sup>1</sup>

As night fell the town began to fill with fugitives from Foulk's Mill, who brought word that Moore was behind them. Just a hundred and fifty years before Wexford had witnessed a too similar scene. Then, as now, a hulk in the river had been converted into

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<sup>1</sup> Narrative of one of the prisoners, named Jackson, quoted by *Musgrave*, vol. ii. p. 24.

a prison for heretics. The hulk had been scuttled without the ceremony of a trial, and all its inmates had perished. In recompense for that deed Cromwell had stormed over the walls of the guilty city, and every rebel found in arms had been put to the sword. General Moore, when he heard of that day's work on the bridge, might prove a second Oliver. Not an instant was to be lost. Lord Kingsborough was taken from the room where he had been confined and made governor of the town. The bloody wretches gathered at his feet and implored him to save them from the doom which they had provoked. Two emissaries were sent at daybreak to Needham, at Oulart, with a promise of surrender, if their lives and properties might be secured; and the leaders in the town undertook to use their influence to persuade the rebels in the country to submit. Lord Kingsborough added a letter, which he could not refuse to write, though he must have known that it could not be listened to, expressing a hope that, for the sake of the surviving prisoners, who were very numerous 'and of the first respectability,' the offer of the townsmen might be accepted.

## SECTION X.

So passed the night of the 20th of June in Wexford.

General Lake, meanwhile, had completed his  
<sup>1798</sup> last dispositions, and Vinegar Hill was to be stormed at daybreak. It was creditable to the skill and spirit of the Irish that preparations so elaborate had been found necessary. The rebels of '98 were at least in earnest. They did not, like their degenerate modern representatives, dissolve like a mist at the touch of the policeman's staff. The different divisions arrived duly at their allotted stations. Dundas and Loftus lay that evening at Solsborough, on the Slaney, two miles above Enniscorthy. Needham had reached Oulart Hill. Johnstone was on Ballymakessy Bridge. At dawn they severally advanced; and if the professed design had been carried out, Needham would have occupied the road to Wexford, and the net would have been closed on every side. From an unexplained cause the orders of the day in this one direction were not carried out, and one opening, called afterwards Needham's Gap, was left. It was whispered afterwards that the mistake was intentional, lest too terrible a vengeance might fall on the wretched beings who had been guilty of crimes so atrocious. If this was the reason, it was misplaced leniency. Nothing but some decisive and overwhelming evidence of the consequences of a rebellion carried out in the spirit

which had been shown in Wexford would ever convince the Irish of the hopelessness of measuring strength with England, or prevent a repetition of the same folly when opportunity seemed again to offer itself. Never had the villanous elements of the Irish population gathered themselves into form with more deliberation, or could have been taken at a time when the nature of their crimes would have made acknowledgment of sympathy with them impossible. Justice would, in the long run, have been found equivalent to mercy, and a stern example made them on Vinegar Hill might have spared Ireland the scenes of barbarity which for five years continued to disgrace her population, and might have extinguished possibly for centuries or for ever the infatuated dreams of an impossible independence which still work like poison in her veins. Subordinate officers, however, cannot be expected to discharge duties as painful as they are serious and stern when they are uncertain of support from authority. General Lake was well aware of the irresolution of the Cabinet, and, with the natural humanity of a brave man, he was perhaps glad to be spared the necessity of adding fresh horrors to a war already savage beyond modern experience.

At sunrise on the 21st the columns closed in upon the Irish camp. Dundas's and Loftus's divisions came down the east bank of the Slaney, spread over a front of almost a mile, and as they approached the hill formed round it at various points from the north

to the south-east. Johnstone came up simultaneously from Ballymakessy. The rebels held Enniscorthy in force, and Johnstone's duty was to drive them out and take possession of the bridge before the general attack commenced. A second time within three weeks the little town of Enniscorthy became the scene of a desperate and bloody engagement. Only after two hours of severe fighting Enniscorthy was taken, the bridge secured, and the rebel garrison forced back over it to their friends on the hill. It was now seven in the morning. The rebel army, sixteen thousand strong, was drawn up on the open ground on the brow. Their guns, thirteen in all, of various sorts and calibre, were at the windmill. General Lake, with Dundas, attacked on the east side; Sir James Duff, with part of Loftus's division, on the north-west, from the bank of the river; Loftus himself was between them. On these three sides they forced their way simultaneously up the slope. The rebels held their ground for an hour and a half with moderate firmness. Lake's horse was killed under him early in the action. Father Clinch, of Enniscorthy, an enormous man, on a tall white horse, specially distinguished himself. But successive defeats had cooled the courage which had been so eminent at Arklow and New Ross. There was no longer the contempt of death which will make even the least disciplined enemy formidable. Lord Roden singled out Father Clinch and killed him. The rebels were afraid of being surrounded; and seeing the southern side of the hill still

open, they fled down it, and escaped through Needham's Gap to Wexford, from the scene of their brief and wild supremacy.

The army rested for the day on the ground, burying the dead, and examining, with ever-gathering indignation, the traces of the butcheries which had been perpetrated there. The rebels, with their surviving generals, Father John, once invincible, now twice beaten, and savage in his despair, John Hay, Edward Fitzgerald, and Father Kerne, streamed away down the east side of the Slaney. Some crossed the river at Carrick Ferry, three miles above Wexford; some went on to the bridge, and rushed mad and furious into the town, threatening vengeance on every Protestant still in their hands. It would have gone hard with the prisoners there; but on the other side General Moore was coming on from Taghmon. Two hours at most would bring him to the gates. Bishop Caulfield and his priests were energetic enough now to prevent a renewal of the murders. If Moore came up when such work was going forward, the town might pay for it as it had paid before. They turned out into the streets, exhorting, praying, threatening, imploring the armed insurgents to leave the place while there was time, and to give no fresh provocation to the soldiers. The cause, they said, was plainly lost for the present. Lord Kingsborough had promised that life and property should be respected, if no more blood was shed. For the sake of Ireland, for the sake of their holy religion,

for the sake of all they held dear in earth or heaven, they besought the rebels to spare the city the risk of being stormed and sacked by the bloody Orangemen.

Their prayers prevailed, and in prevailing left them with the less excuse for their apathy on the preceding day. Towards sunset part of the rebels filed back over the bridge out of the town. Dixon and his wife, on horseback, threw themselves in their way, praying them to stay at least till they had despatched the remaining prisoners. They were borne away in the crowd, the woman screaming, 'We shall conquer yet: my Saviour tells me we must conquer.' These wretches went north to Gorey, where they committed a frightful massacre on the unfortunate Protestant inhabitants who, imagining themselves safe in the rear of the army, had returned to their homes. Thence, breaking into smaller parties, they made for the Wicklow mountains. The rest, the remainder mainly of the army which had fought at Vinegar Hill, rallying under the indefatigable Father John, slipped away behind General Moore, who had halted two miles from the town, and made their way over the Barrow into Kilkenny, carrying havoc and destruction along with them. Moore, in the twilight, entered Wexford after they had all left it. The scene was described as 'most affecting.' 'The windows were crowded with women who had been expecting massacre.' The prisoners in the gaol heard, in the noise of the approaching troops, the summons as they supposed to death upon the bridge. When the door was

thrown open they saw the King's uniform, and knew that they were saved.

At three o'clock the following morning (June 22nd) the trumpet sounded in Lake's camp on Vinegar Hill. Before the army began its march for <sup>1798</sup> Wexford, Edward Hay<sup>1</sup> and Captain Macmanus, the bearers of the proposals of the townsmen to submit on conditions, were brought into Lake's presence. They had failed to find Needham, to whom they were commissioned. They had gone on to Ennis-corthy, and were carried before the Commander-in-Chief. It was not then known that Moore was in the town. They delivered their message. Lake replied briefly that he would make no terms with rebels in arms against their sovereign. He required instant and unconditional surrender. If they hesitated, he said, he would use the force entrusted to him with the utmost energy for their destruction; all which he held out in the way of hope was, that he would spare the ignorant masses if they would give up their leaders and their weapons and return to their allegiance.

Mr. Hay, unconscious of a difference between honourable enemies and murdering rebels, and considering that both were equally entitled to the courtesies of war, pleaded the promise of Lord Kingsborough. Kingsborough, if he had given a promise, had exceeded his powers, and Lake refused to be bound by

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<sup>1</sup> The historian of the rebellion.



it. He marched at once to Wexford, entered it, re-established authority, and proceeded to the hard but necessary duty of searching for and punishing those on whom rested the chief responsibility for the crimes of the past month. Father Roche, who had commanded at Foulk's Mill, had remained in the town, on the faith, it is pretended, of the conditions of surrender. Father Roche could not have been ignorant that a person in the position of Lord Kingsborough could grant no conditions. Had Lord Kingsborough possessed sufficient authority there would have been no occasion to send a deputation to General Lake. Father Roche was taken, tried by court-martial, and hanged at the scene of the massacre on the bridge. John Hay, Father John's brother general on Vinegar Hill, was hanged beside him. Special care was taken to make no distinctions on the score of religion. The Protestants concerned in the rebellion, though guiltless of a share in the murders, were more criminal in principle. Cornelius Grogan had an estate worth ten thousand pounds a year. He had misjudged events, and had joined the insurgents to save it. He was found at his own house, brought in, tried by the same tribunal, and hanged also.

Bagenal Harvey and Colclough had disappeared. They had gone off in a boat to the larger of the Saltee Islands,<sup>1</sup> Grogan's property, which Colclough rented

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<sup>1</sup> Small islands off the coast, half-way between Wexford and Waterford harbours.

of him, and they hoped to lie concealed there till the storm was over. Some one betrayed their secret; and on the 23rd of June Captain Willoughby was sent in the 'Rutland' cutter to find them and bring them back. There was but one house in the island, and there were unmistakable signs of their recent presence, in the sheets upon the bed and the clothes which were lying about the room. The cabin was searched; the island was searched. They were not to be found. A boat had been seen stealing away when the cutter was approaching, and it was thought that they had escaped. As a last chance the cutter's gig was rowed round the island under the cliffs. One of the crew, watching narrowly, observed a place where the earth seemed to have been recently disturbed. They landed and discovered a cave, where the two gentlemen, with Colclough's wife, were lying concealed. They were carried back to Wexford, and sentenced to immediate death. Bagenal Harvey, Cornelius Grogan, and a wealthy citizen of Wexford named Prendergast, were hanged on the 27th. Colclough suffered the same fate on the following day.

On the 27th General Lake put out a proclamation that, to prevent further bloodshed, every man who had not been a leader in the insurrection and would give up his arms should receive a free pardon. If the offer was not accepted, and the late outrages were renewed or continued, every village, cottage, and farmhouse found unoccupied would be destroyed, and every man found with arms in his hands would be put to

the sword. The next day he returned to Dublin, where his presence was immediately required, leaving General Hunter to investigate the massacre on the bridge, and to punish as they deserved the chief actors in so horrible a crime.

The insurgents who escaped with Father John over the Barrow, after ravaging part of Kilkenny, and finding the peasants, contrary to their expectation, disinclined to join them, doubled back into Wexford, and thence into the Wicklow mountains, where, divided into roving gangs of murderous banditti, they protracted through the summer the bloody and miserable struggle. Father John, either separated from his companions by accident, or having designedly withdrawn from them, found his way in disguise to Taghmon, where he was recognised and arrested. When seized, he struggled like a wild beast, but vengeance had overtaken him. After forty-five years of hitherto inoffensive life, he had become possessed with the 'Irish idea'; and after one desperate month of murder, triumph, defeat, and ruin, he closed his career on the gallows on the 26th of June.

## CHAPTER II.

## LORD CORNWALLIS AND THE UNION.

## SECTION I.

**T**HE delay in sending reinforcements to Ireland was due, as has been already said, to other causes than the carelessness of the Cabinet. <sup>1798</sup> The persevering disloyalty of the Liberal party in both Houses of the English Legislature had created a condition of public feeling which could be affected only by the publication of secrets which Pitt was forbidden to reveal.

Defeated in the Irish Parliament, Mr. Grattan, the Duke of Leinster, and the Ponsonbies had transferred their agitation to Great Britain, where they found ardent allies in the new school of politicians, who believed that the overthrow of authority was the condition of human improvement. After the reproof which he had received from Clare, Lord Moira returned to Westminster, where ignorance of Ireland procured him a more sympathising audience. In March 1797 he introduced a motion for the recall of Lord Camden, and the replacement of Fitzwilliam in the Viceroyalty.

Could a glass have been held up to Moira which would have reflected his true image, he would have seen that he and Lord Fitzwilliam and their brother-absentees were the persons chiefly responsible for the condition to which Ireland was reduced. There was an ironical appropriateness in non-resident Irish proprietors putting themselves forward as the advocates of political concessions which were but spurious substitutes for measures of genuine reform. Moira insisted that Fitzwilliam must return to the Castle. Fitzwilliam himself declared that, had he been allowed to carry out his policy, the Irish would have returned to their allegiance. The great English Whigs echoed the idle cry. 'Give back to the Irish,' said the Duke of Bedford, 'the man whom they admire; act on the principles on which he acted, and discontent will cease.' 'Let the people have their rights,' said Lord Lansdowne, 'and they will require neither fleets nor armies to protect them.' 'The more Ireland is under Irish government,' said Fox, forgetting his own experience in '82, 'the more she will be bound to English interest.' The Cabinet, tied to secrecy, could give but feeble answers. The Opposition had the best of the debate, and their printed speeches were circulated throughout the two islands, addressing themselves in England to a generous people, ready to believe in freedom and to suspect authority which was compelled to be severe; persuading the Irish conspirators that their treason was undiscovered, that they had nothing to fear from English interference, and that they would be left alone,

as Dundas had threatened Westmoreland, to settle accounts with the Castle by themselves.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, England continued to believe Lord Moira's rhetoric, and to regard Camden, Clare, and Carhampton as a triumvirate of tyrants. The papers contained their daily anecdotes of picketing and flogging, one instance, by trifling alterations, expanding itself into many. The sympathy of the English nation with the suffering Irish was only equalled by its ignorance of them. After the arrest of the Revolutionary Committee at Oliver Bond's house, on the 12th of March, 1798, the Duke of Bedford again moved for an address to the King to change his Irish Ministers. He told the Lords that if he was to dwell in detail on the conduct of the Irish Administration, the picture would appal the stoutest heart. Lord Holland demanded especially the dismissal of the Viceroy and the Chancellor. The speeches of both these eminent men contained indignant denials either that any treasonable conspiracy existed in Ireland or any desire for separation from Great Britain, and were interspersed with appropriate commendations of Arthur O'Connor, the advocate of political assassination.

Lord Grenville defended the Government as far as he was able. The lives of magistrates must be defended, he said, and the laws must be maintained. Lord Downshire, fresh from Ulster and his own estates, reproached the Liberals for their heedless encouragement of a spirit of which they knew nothing. Their

'conciliation,' he told them, might convert Ireland into a province of France, but would never save it to Great Britain. In excited times those orators alone gain the public ear who appeal to sentiment. The motion for dismissal was lost, but a protest was entered in the Journals of the House of Lords, bearing the weighty names of the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Norfolk, and Lord Holland; and popular clamour, well-intending but utterly uninformed, continued to grow.

The unfavourable opinion was confirmed by the acquittal of Arthur O'Connor at Maidstone. The failure of the Government was accepted as a proof that they had no evidence which they could produce, and therefore that the conspiracy was a dream. O'Connor's second arrest on another charge was indignantly denounced. Lord Holland called it inhuman and atrocious. Tierney and Sheridan commented with all their eloquence on the breakdown of the prosecution, and the Cabinet was unable to clear itself. Finally, when Lord Edward Fitzgerald was shot and the rebellion burst out, and the horrid work of murder and incendiarism had begun, the eloquence of the Opposition rose to the greatness of the occasion. They found in Ireland a second America, and they called on England to support them in refusing to the Government the means of continuing their oppression. The Irish, they said, were not in arms against Great Britain, but against the insupportable tyranny of a detested faction. If, instead of sending armies to crush them, they had redressed the complaints of the

American colonists, the American colonies would have remained attached to the empire. As America had been in 1776, so Ireland was in 1798—lost, if the war was persevered in; recovered to a more sure allegiance, if the claim to self-government was acknowledged.

The Whigs had been proved right about America. The English people concluded that they might be right about Ireland. Public opinion went with them, and the Parliamentary orators redoubled their exertions.

On the 14th of June, when Lord Camden was writing that without instant reinforcements all Ireland would be in a flame, Sheridan inter-<sup>1798</sup>posed with a motion for a Committee of Inquiry, and out of two hundred members found forty-three to support him. Defeated, he moved once more for an address to the King to dismiss Camden and his Irish advisers, whom he charged with having produced the insurrection. This motion was negatived also, but the speech was published, and did its work; and the next day the Duke of Leinster renewed the accusation in the House of Lords. Lord Edward was just known to be dead. The Duke's appearance in deep mourning gave sensational credibility to his invectives. He too denied that any disloyal spirit existed in Ireland beyond the brain of the Viceroy and Council, who were driving the people to madness. The outside world not unnaturally believed him.



The Duke of Norfolk followed with a demand for the removal from office 'of those persons to whom the afflicted people of Ireland could feel no sentiments save those of anger and revenge.' An unfavourable division was again followed by a protest to which were attached the names of six peers—the Dukes of Devonshire, Leinster, and Norfolk, Lords Moira, Fitzwilliam, and Ponsonby—five of them Irish absentees, who were discharging thus their duties to the poor country which supported their idle magnificence.

Three days later, when Dundas applied to Parliament for permission to send over English militia regiments which had volunteered for the Irish war, these same wise noblemen and gentlemen renewed an opposition as cruel as it was absurd. If their object was to repress the cruelties of the Irish loyalists, it could only be obtained by the presence of English regiments. If they wished the rebels to succeed, they were making themselves parties to high treason. Yet Lord William Russell was not ashamed to say that English troops should not be sent to subjugate a neighbouring people to a Government which nine-tenths of them abhorred. Sheridan said 'the Irish had been duped, insulted, fooled, disappointed in their dearest hopes. No wonder they were discontented, no wonder they were indignant.' 'If,' said Tierney, 'I could be convinced that the Irish leaders had invited the French into the land, I would consent to send troops to resist

them, but I deny that they have invited the French. Lord Fitzwilliam says it is untrue, and I believe Lord Fitzwilliam more than I believe the Government. The Irish people are in arms—no doubt of it. After having been scourged, burnt, and massacred, they are not likely to be in love with their rulers. But I for one will not agree to place the militia of England at the disposition of a desperate Irish faction. The cure for Irish rebellion is to gain the affections of the people. I will vote neither a man nor a guinea till the cause of the rebellion is known.'

Wilberforce came to the help of the Cabinet. To refuse troops, he said justly, would but increase the misery of the people. The force at present in Ireland might subdue the rebellion at last, but only after a bloody and furious struggle. Humanity as well as policy required that the insurgents should perceive the hopelessness of prolonged resistance in arms. The rebellion was not created by Lord Camden's Administration, it was the consequence of long-standing and varied misconduct and neglect. 'I cannot help,' he said, with a bitter glance at the motives of the Liberal faction, 'protesting against the kind of sensibility I see in some gentlemen, who seem not to begin to feel for the wretched condition of the lower Irish until it becomes for party purposes a convenient subject of lamentation in this House.'

Wilberforce could not be suspected of sympathy with tyranny or indifference to human suffering. Leave was given for the militia to go, and regiment

after regiment was poured across the Channel as fast as they could be moved to the coast. But the Opposition speeches had their effect notwithstanding. The public did not choose to obstruct the Government in measures necessary to restore peace, but they shared the suspicions which the inexplicable reserve of the Ministers could not fail to generate; and in sending the troops the Cabinet felt compelled to show a certain deference to the general misgiving, and to place a nobleman at the head of the Irish Administration in whose rectitude the nation had confidence. To recall Camden was to admit, at least in appearance, that the charges against his administration were just, and the Cabinet knew well that he acted throughout with their fullest approbation; but the outcry was too strong to be resisted. Camden's position had long been intolerable to him, and only the highest principle had induced him to endure so long the ungrateful and dangerous burden. An excuse was found to cover the change in the probability of a French invasion, and in the desirableness at such a crisis of the presence of a soldier at the Castle. In justice to a nobleman who had carried himself in his high position with signal uprightness, Mr. Pitt ought to have assumed the responsibility for the parts of Lord Camden's conduct which the public condemned, but which Pitt knew to have been necessary. Portland ought to have confessed that he had recommended the acceptance of the services of the Orangemen, and that Camden had refused on grounds supremely honourable to him.

But Cabinet Ministers dependent on Parliamentary majorities are rarely capable of acts of heroic virtue. Enough that Camden was removed, that Cornwallis reconsidered his refusal of the past year and consented to be named as his successor.

## SECTION II.

THE nomination of Lord Cornwallis to the Vice-royalty of Ireland was generally approved in 1798 England, as well on account of his reputation as a soldier and a statesman, as because he was known to have disapproved the coercive policy of Lord Camden's Government. He was a nobleman of stainless honour, excellent intention, and commonplace intelligence. He had shared the popular impression that Ireland ought to be conciliated by Catholic Emancipation and Reform. The secret information which the Cabinet laid before him on entering upon his office satisfied him that it was vain to attempt to remodel the existing Irish Legislature. If the Catholics were to be emancipated he saw that the Irish Parliament must come to an end. But Emancipation itself, he was as much convinced as ever, would recall the Catholic population to its allegiance; and he disapproved the existing Constitution, not because it was incompatible with a firm and honest Government, but because it was the instrument and the representative of Protestant ascendancy.

The combination of unacquaintance with the facts and unhesitating trust in his own judgment revealed themselves in a series of errors, which, inasmuch as Lord Cornwallis's opinions affected so materially the

subsequent policy of England, it is worth while to notice more particularly.

First, he misunderstood the nature of the rebellion. He found on his arrival that it was generally spoken of as Catholic. He called this account of it 'folly.' He insisted that it was *Jacobin*. Cornwallis might call it Jacobin, but could not make it so. Jacobin doctrines had been industriously sown among the Irish Catholic peasantry, but the soil was unfavourable to their growth. The taint was confined to the clubs at Dublin and Belfast, and had but a faint existence among the rebel bands of Wexford and Kildare. The rebellion was neither Jacobin nor Catholic; it was the revival of Irish nationality: and because the religion of the Irish was connected so closely with the national spirit, the rebellion, like every other Irish rising since the Reformation, assumed a Catholic aspect, and was regarded as a holy war. The aspirations of the native race had been quickened into life by the fantastic pretensions of the Protestant colony to independence. The English Cabinet had played with them in an ignorant dream that they might form a check on the revolutionary temper of the Northern reformers. They had been led on from concession to concession till the Irish had believed, as in Tyrconnell's time, that their country was to be their own again—restored to them by the forms of the Constitution. Their hopes had been raised too high to allow them to bear disappointment. The political agitators of Belfast and Dublin, dangerous

nowhere but in the press or in debating committees—brave in recommending assassinations, and leaving others to execute them—had cowered down when they had to yield or to fight. The Irish people had risen from the sleep of a century, and furiously, savagely, and desperately were struggling to break their chains.

Not less Lord Cornwallis had mistaken the character of the Protestant gentry. Their Parliament had been absurd and corrupt. Their Volunteer movement had been ridiculous, their attitude towards England unwise and unbecoming; the conduct of many of them, in private life and towards their dependents, had been reckless and negligent. But they were not, as Cornwallis supposed them, a sanguinary oligarchy overtaken by a judgment on their crimes, and bent on the extirpation of the miserable people whom they were no longer able to oppress. Their faults might be many, but they were due as much to their position as to themselves. The descendants of the Scotch and English settlers planted by Elizabeth, and James, and Cromwell, were a garrison in a hostile country. Had they been permitted to develop their resources they might have thriven and grown strong: but England for her own purposes condemned the country to barrenness, and its inhabitants to misery and want. She rejected them when they petitioned to be incorporated in the Empire. She extinguished their manufactures and their shipping, and discouraged them long even from cultivating their estates,

lest the value of her own lands should suffer from the rivalry. The settlers were essentially an army of occupation, of which the gentry were the officers; yet half of them were allowed unlimited leave of absence, deserting their special charge, and handing over the people committed to them to be plundered and ground to wretchedness. If those who remained became negligent and careless, England had set them the example and had pointed out the road. If they were politically corrupt, England had begun with prostituting their patronage and misappropriating their revenues. If they were discontented and mutinous, never in the history of the world had any subjects more just ground for complaint. Cornwallis knew nothing of their history. He knew but little of what they actually were. On the roll of the Irish Parliament are long lists of honourable men, untainted by corrupt transactions with the officials at the Castle, landowners who remained on their estates, and fought to the best of their ability their ever-losing battle against vice and misery. To them and their exertions Ireland owed all that she possessed in the form of order and decency. They had given her a language and laws at least better than her own; and even the yoke of the worst of them was lighter on the peasantry than the little finger of their own chiefs. Where the peasantry suffered most, it was under the middlemen and agents of the absentees—under men who were for the most part of their own blood, and those chiefs' lineal representatives. England, not the gentry, was most to blame



for the condition of Irish society. The clamours of the colony for self-government, their rant of patriotism, the applauding shouts with which they greeted their Grattans and their Floods become intelligible and almost pardonable, when studied by the light of England's accursed legislation and yet more unpardonable policy. It would have been better and happier by far had England never confiscated the lands of the Irish, had she governed Ireland as she governs India, and never attempted to force upon her a landed gentry of alien blood. Having chosen the second alternative, having given the land and the Constitution into the hands of men of her own race and creed, principle as well as prudence should have taught her to remember their difficulties, and to encourage them in introducing habits of order and industry, which would have reconciled the people through prosperity to the imposed presence of the stranger among them. The wisdom of England had been to weaken her garrison instead of strengthening it, to make it useless for purposes of government, to saturate it with the elements of disorder, and when it broke into discontent and complaint to hold it in check by elevating and arming as a counterpoise the wronged and resentful race whom it was planted in the island to keep in awe. Ingenuity could not have invented a line of action more certain to precipitate rebellion. When the Protestants at the last moment felt the knife at their throats, when they found themselves threatened with a second 1641, when they found England, which had

provoked the insurrection, turn round and charge it upon themselves, and refuse to help them, Cornwallis should neither have been shocked nor surprised when desperate men turned to desperate remedies ; and being too few in number to hold in subjection the poor frenzied wretches who had begun a war of extermination, were being driven to write upon their memories a lesson which it should be impossible for them to forget. The Yeomanry were strong enough to destroy the rebels. They were not strong enough to pardon them. Irresistible power alone can afford to be merciful. The Protestants of Ireland, like the scanty English garrisons of earlier times, having to deal with an irreconcilable foe, as fierce as a wolf and as untamable, were being taught, in spite of themselves, that if England declined to stand by them, they and the Irish could not live side by side, and that if they would sleep in peace thenceforward they must give no quarter to enemies in arms. Cornwallis saw the feeling, and was shocked at it. He did not care to inquire into the grounds in which it originated ; although, had he cared to reflect, his Indian experience might have enlightened him. In studying Ireland he was thinking, not of India, which would have been full of instruction for him, but of America, which was fatally misleading. He regarded the disposition of the Parliament and Privy Council as a confirmation of the accusations which had been levelled against them by Lord Moira ; and, with an insight into Irish history which, if his letters were not unjust to him, extended no further

than the preceding year, he attributed the rebellion to the whips and pitch-caps of the Yeomanry, and as such determined to deal with it.

Again, and more fatally, Cornwallis mistook the character of the native Irish. Like every Englishman who becomes first acquainted with them, he found much in their character that interested and attached him. From the impurity which disgraced other nations they were singularly free. To one another they were affectionate and charitable. In the army he had himself experienced the fine qualities of courage and fidelity which reveal themselves invariably when the Irishman is under military discipline. He looked upon them as an innocent, cruelly injured people, who had been driven mad by tyranny, and required nothing but gentleness and kindness to bring them back to their allegiance.

Gentleness and kindness the Irish indeed needed, but the gentleness of inflexible authority and the kindness of even-handed justice. Cromwell had landed in Ireland under circumstances not unlike those of Lord Cornwallis. Cromwell insisted first on absolute submission, and when submission was refused dealt two blows so resolutely, so sternly, and with so clear a meaning, that rebellion turned sick, lay down and died, and peace was restored to Ireland with a loss of life which was as nothing compared to the waste and ruin of a protracted war.

## SECTION III.

WITH his mind preoccupied by false impressions, and fortified against a possible correction of them by the conviction that he, with his English common-<sup>1798</sup> sense, understood the country better than those who had lived in it from their childhood, Lord Cornwallis landed at Dublin on the 20th of June. On the following morning the rebel camp on Vinegar Hill was stormed by General Lake. Wexford was occupied by Moore. The insurgent force was broken up, and from that moment made no more attempts to encounter the troops in the field. The rebellion, however, did not cease to be dangerous. Rather it became more dangerous, for it assumed a form with which it was infinitely more difficult to deal. From being concentrated it became dispersed; from being local it became universal. Wexford, Wicklow, and the midland counties were overspread with detached parties of banditti, who no longer showed an open front, but appeared in their more congenial character, as 'cruel robbers, housebreakers, and murderers.'<sup>1</sup> In every direction, on a reduced scale, the atrocities of Wexford were repeated. Houses of Protestants were set on fire. The inhabitants, the men at least, were piked or shot. The perpetrators of these infernal deeds were savagely

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<sup>1</sup> 'Cornwallis to General Ross, July 13.'—*Cornwallis Correspondence*.

slaughtered in revenge ; and Cornwallis found himself in a scene of horror the like of which he had never witnessed in America, in India, or anywhere. His pity was for the rebels ; his indignation was for the severity with which they were treated by the Yeomanry.<sup>1</sup> With the support of Lord Clare, whom, to his confessed astonishment, he found 'by far the most moderate and right-headed man in the country,' he endeavoured to arrest the spirit which was manifesting itself, by an act of amnesty. In a general proclamation he promised pardon, protection, and free permission to return to his home, to every insurgent who would lay down his arms, and had not been guilty of deliberate murder in cold blood. To the originators and organisers of the political conspiracy he refused, and so far most properly, to allow the excuses which he could imagine for the Catholic Celts. There was still a want of evidence against the Committee who had been arrested on the 12th of March. Addys Emmett, Arthur O'Connor, and MacNeven, the most guilty of the whole party, were protected by the unwillingness of the informers to appear against them. With others who had been seized on the eve of the outbreak there was not the same difficulty. On the 12th of July John and Henry Sheares were brought to the

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<sup>1</sup> Yet Cornwallis admitted that the atrocities committed by the rebels were greater than the retaliation inflicted upon them. 'The deluded wretches,' he wrote, 'are still wandering about in considerable bodies, and are committing still greater cruelties than they themselves suffer.'—'To Portland, June 28, 1798.'

bar to take their trial for high treason. Captain Armstrong swore to their conversations with him. The address to the people of Ireland found in Henry Sheares's desk, and in the handwriting of his brother, was fatally corroborative. When sentence was pronounced they fell into each other's arms in court. Henry, the younger, said he had a wife and six children, and prayed for a respite, to arrange his affairs and provide for them. His sobs choked him as he spoke. John Sheares endeavoured gallantly to shield him by taking the blame upon himself. But the pleading of neither could avail. Their guilt was as plain as it was gratuitous. Rebellion in Ireland was too terrible a thing for theoretic politicians to be allowed to play with it with impunity. They were both executed on the 14th.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henry Sheares, after his sentence, wrote an agonised letter to Jonah Barrington, imploring him to save his life. The Chancellor whom he had wished to murder was now his only hope.

'Tell the Chancellor,' he said, 'that I will pray for him for ever, and that Government shall ever find me what they wish. Oh! my family! my wife! my children! my mother! Go to them. Let them throw themselves at the Chancellor's and Lord Shannon's feet. I have been duped, misled, deceived, but with all the wishes and intention to do good.'

'It is only justice to Lord

Clare,' writes Barrington, in relating the story, 'to record an incident which proves that he was susceptible of human feelings. By some unfortunate delay the letter was not delivered to me till eleven o'clock of the morning after the trial. I waited on Lord Clare. He read it with great attention. I saw he was moved. He said, "What a coward he is! But what can we do?" He paused. "John Sheares cannot be spared," he said. "Do you think Henry can say anything, or make any discovery which can authorise the Viceroy in making a distinction? If so, Henry may be reprieved.

The next to be tried was John MacCann, a gentleman of private fortune in Dublin. He had been a member of the Revolutionary Committee. Reynolds, the informer, appeared in evidence against him. A treasonable paper was found in his handwriting when he was taken. Curran used his skill in torturing Reynolds; but, though he could display his own power as an advocate, he could not obtain a verdict for his client. MacCann was found guilty, and suffered five days after the brothers Sheares.

William Byrne, a Wicklow gentleman, was tried and convicted on the 20th. On the 23rd, Oliver Bond, at whose house the Committee sate, was convicted and sentenced also. The rapidity of the proceedings, and the unexpected readiness of the juries to find verdicts for the Crown, began to startle the remaining prisoners. They knew their guilt. They knew that the Government was aware of it, and they could not tell what evidence might not now be producible against them. Samuel Neilson, who had been taken outside Newgate, had reason to expect the worst. Arthur O'Connor remembered his near escape at Maidstone, and feared that another time he might not be saved by evidence to character. Byrne and Oliver Bond were to have been hanged on the

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Go to the prison. See him. Ask him this question, and return to me." I hastened to Newgate, and arrived at the moment when the executioner was holding up the

head of my friend and saying, "Here is the head of a traitor."  
 —*Historic Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 266-7.

25th and 26th of July. Life was usually granted in return for valuable information, and the prisoners in a body—there were seventy of them in all—sent word to Cornwallis that if their own lives and the lives of their two friends might be spared they would make a full and free confession. Cornwallis had been in the deepest embarrassment about these men. He had no desire to show them mercy.<sup>1</sup> The leaders among them he was well aware were the persons really responsible for the rebellion, and deserved the severest penalties which the law could inflict. Public witnesses, however, were not to be found, and to try them would end probably in their acquittal. On the other hand, a confession of the circumstances of the conspiracy, of which the existence had been so fiercely denied, an acknowledgment from Arthur O'Connor himself of his negotiation with General Hoche, of which so many eminent Whig statesmen had appeared in court to declare him incapable, would not only be a political triumph, but would be materially useful in tranquilising English opinion. It was not that the Government wanted information. They already knew as much, perhaps, as the prisoners could tell them. They wanted to be able to satisfy the world; and no question could any more be raised when the chief actors had admitted their guilt.

The Chancellor was in the country. Cornwallis

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<sup>1</sup> 'He says this pointedly. See letter to the Duke of Portland, October 29, 1798.'



consulted the Chief Justices and the Attorney and Solicitor General. They were unanimous in objecting to a compromise with men whose guilt was of so dark a dye. They said that if Byrne and Bond were not executed no Irish juries would find again for the Crown in a trial for treason. When the Viceroy objected that under no circumstances was there a hope of a verdict against O'Connor and his companions, he was answered that more than one might perhaps be convicted, and that others could be proceeded against in Parliament.<sup>1</sup> An attainder had much to recommend it. If the proceeding was exceptional, the circumstances were exceptional which called for it. It was extremely desirable to show Irish traitors that the cowardice of witnesses and the perjury of jurymen could not always secure them from the consequences of their crimes. But such a measure could be ventured only by a body whose purity of purpose was above possibility of suspicion. The reputation of the Irish Parliament was not of this unblemished kind, and any high-handed overriding of the forms of justice would only confirm the suspicions already too prevalent in England.

Cornwallis consented that the law should take effect on Byrne, who was hanged on the day appointed. The execution, however, instead of inducing the pri-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Carleton said that several of those who signed the papers, and particularly Dr. MacNeven, might possibly be convicted, and that others might be liable to pains and penalties by proceeding against them in Parliament.'—'Cornwallis to Portland, July 26, 1798.'

soners to withdraw their proposal, led them to renew it with increased eagerness. The Chancellor came back at the moment to Dublin. His opinion coincided with that of the Viceroy, and on the approval of Lord Clare the Judges withdrew their opposition. O'Connor and MacNeven were informed that the offer would be accepted; and Cornwallis, before he knew what they intended to write, could scarcely contain his satisfaction. 'What,' he wrote, 'will the gentlemen who appeared at Maidstone say to this? It is the most complete triumph, both in England and Ireland.'<sup>1</sup> His exultation was diminished when the confession was placed in his hands. The prisoners had stipulated for the publication of it. The composition was O'Connor's. Secure behind a promise of life, they naively paraded their treasons before Ireland and the world in a tone of bold bravado. They admitted that they had conspired to raise a rebellion and to introduce a French army, and they declared that they were justified in what they had done. They threatened the British Government with the perpetual enmity of the Irish race, and informed Government and the public either that Ireland must be allowed her own way, or that they must extirpate the population. Cornwallis treated this remarkable production as a deliberate insult. He sent a copy of it to the Cabinet. He told the prisoners that they must alter it, or it would not be received as a discharge of their engagement. They refused

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<sup>1</sup> 'To General Ross, July 30, 1798.'

to make any changes, anticipating that it would be published as it stood. But a Committee of the House of Lords was sitting to inquire into the causes of the rebellion, and as an alternative they agreed to give evidence before it. They answered every question which was put to them with adequate frankness. The tone of insolence remained, but the rhetorical declamation was escaped. The publication of the Committee's report answered the end which Cornwallis desired, and at least exposed with sufficient completeness the value of the insight of the English Liberals into Irish character and Irish affairs.

The Cabinet meanwhile had considered the document which Cornwallis had sent over to them, and on the perusal of it were so justly indignant, that before they were aware that the Viceroy had allowed the prisoners to appear before the Committee they had resolved to refuse their sanction to negotiation in any form whatever. Even Cornwallis himself they were inclined to blame for his excess of anxiety to excuse and pardon traitors.

'We consider,' the Duke of Portland wrote to him,<sup>1</sup> 'that the proposal should not be listened to. The memoir, beyond admission of the writers' criminality, contributes nothing to what we already knew. On the contrary, an air of presumption, arrogance, in-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Portland to Cornwallis, August 15, 1798. Secret and confidential.' S.P.O. Endorsed 'Not Sent.'

solence, and superiority so pervades the whole, that I cannot but feel their conduct to be a great aggravation of their former crime. I ought not perhaps to wonder that men who, in the act of expiating the greatest of all crimes, permit themselves to tell you that you must extirpate or reform, should not see the behaviour of which I complain in the light in which it strikes me. But I cannot but observe that such an opinion, uttered at such a moment, if it is to be received as a testimony of honesty and good faith, is not less so of those dangerous and destructive principles to which the present convulsion of Europe is to be attributed. And so much I fear that nothing but a system of continued unremitting and active opposition can overcome it, that I cannot believe it can be softened by any concession or operated upon by any lenity, unless it is exercised under a conviction on the part of those who experience its benefits that those who use it are able to crush and annihilate the objects on whom it is bestowed. Your Excellency, therefore, must excuse me if I doubt the advantages which your natural disposition inclines you to hope for, from the establishment of a character for extraordinary lenity. I must, though I am sorry to say it, give it you as my opinion that the most desirable idea to establish in Ireland, and that which will lead most readily and surely to the object we have all in view, is that you are possessed of an overwhelming and irresistible power, which can neither be overturned nor shaken, and which is able and ready to punish impar-

tially alike all offenders against the law. Then I think you may show mercy and indulge the feelings which are so well known to be congenial to your nature. But till then I fear that acts of lenity must be done with a sparing and distinguishing hand. In the temper which unhappily prevails in Ireland the most amiable motives will be misrepresented and misunderstood, and a conduct suggested by the finest and best of feelings will be attributed to pusillanimity and fear, and be productive of contempt and licentiousness instead of gratitude and attachment. Such, I fear, is human nature in the state of civilisation which it has acquired in Ireland, and such, I fear, it will remain until it is forced to conform itself to a more rigorous and austere observance of civil institutions and the laws of the country.'

Had the resolution of the Cabinet been formed more expeditiously, Cornwallis would probably have resigned, and the policy of conciliation would have been suspended. But before the despatch could leave London the faith of the Government had been pledged to the prisoners. Their evidence had been given and printed; it remained only to abide by the agreement, and to inform O'Connor and his friends that if they published their manifesto they would be considered, one and all, as parties to a fresh crime, and be excluded from the benefit of the pardon. The original intention was to allow them to emigrate to America. Mr. Rufus King, the American Minister, after reading the report of the Secret Committee, protested, in

the name of the United States, against the introduction there of such pernicious and dangerous miscreants.<sup>1</sup> They were sent to Fort St. George in Scotland, where they were detained till the Peace of Amiens, and were then released, on condition that they should never return to Ireland. O'Connor went to France; America consented after all to receive Emmett and MacNeven; and in their several places of refuge they continued their implacable animosity against the Government of Great Britain, which had rescued them from the justice of their countrymen.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The principles and opinions of these men are, in my view, so dangerous, so false, so utterly inconsistent with any practicable or stable form of government, that I feel it to be a duty to my country to express to your Grace my earnest wishes that the United States may be excepted from the countries to which the Irish state prisoners shall be permitted to retire.'—'Mr. Rufus King to the Duke of Portland, September 13, 1798.' S.P.O.

## SECTION IV.

Too late to render effective help, not too late to  
 1798 aggravate the exasperation of the Protestants  
 and inflate the hopes of the rebels, their French  
 allies now appeared upon the scene. Napoleon's in-  
 difference to Ireland had prevented any fresh attempt  
 for an organised invasion in force. But the scheme  
 of flying squadrons to hover on the coast, and make  
 local descents wherever opportunity offered, had con-  
 tinued before the minds of the Directory; and as soon  
 as it was known in Paris that the Irish were in arms,  
 orders were given to prepare detachments as quickly  
 as possible to be sent to their assistance. General  
 Humbert, who had been with Hoche at Bantry, was  
 commissioned to organise a force at Rochelle; General  
 Hardy to collect another at Brest. They were designed  
 to sail together, and to act in concert, if not in union.  
 Hardy's division was the largest, and Humbert was  
 ready before him. August came, and Admiral Bom-  
 part's squadron, which was to convey Hardy, was still  
 behindhand. The Irish exiles were wild with impa-  
 tience, and Humbert at last started alone, with no  
 more than 1,100 men, accompanied by Barclay Tee-  
 ling and Matthew Tone, Wolfe Tone's brother. He  
 landed at Killala, on the north coast of Mayo, on the  
 22nd of August, distributed five thousand stand of  
 arms among the Irish peasants who came to join him,

and marched at once into the interior. On the 25th he was at Ballina. Unless he could be met and checked immediately, it was feared that the whole country would be again in flames, and General Lake and General Hutchinson, who were at Galway when Humbert arrived, hurried up to intercept him. They reached Castlebar on the 26th, with 2,000 men, militia chiefly, and a battery of field artillery. Humbert advanced in the night by a difficult mountain-road, which had been thought impassable and had been left unguarded, and came on Lake by surprise at daybreak. He had left part of his small force in garrison at Killala. He had but eight hundred French with him, something over a thousand armed Irish peasants, and three small guns. The Kilkenny and Longford militia, who formed the principal part of Lake's force, were Catholics, and many of them United Irishmen. They were said to have been tampered with. If not tampered with, they were unwilling or unable to encounter disciplined troops. They ran at the first advance of the French. The Galway Volunteers followed. The few artillerymen and Lord Roden's Fencibles from Ulster attempted to stand, but were overborne. Lake was totally defeated, and his guns were taken. Now or never was the time for the Irish patriots to show what they were made of. Had they been in earnest, their regiments, so long organised, would have started out of the earth as at a trumpet-call. But they preferred to wait, and let their allies fight their battles for them. Their zeal showed itself only in an effer-



vescence of murder and robbery, which Humbert himself had to check. To his surprise he found himself, notwithstanding his victory, substantially alone, or joined only by a miserable rabble who were worse than useless to him. Had he been left unmolested, the Irish would probably have gathered heart. General Hardy was expected hourly from Brest. If Hardy landed while Humbert was still at large and successful, the consequences would, no doubt, be serious. Cornwallis took the field in person, with the troops in Dublin, while Lake collected his defeated regiments.

Perplexed at a reception so different from what they had been taught to look for, the French turned into Sligo with no definite purpose. They gained a second small success at Colooney Bridge; and hearing that the insurgents were up in Longford they struck across Leitrim, and passed the Shannon at Ballintra. Lake was close behind them. Cornwallis, in superior force, was in front. Before he could reach Longford, Humbert found himself surrounded; and seventeen days after his landing he closed his brief adventurous career by surrendering at Ballinamuck. The French became prisoners of war, and were treated courteously. Teeling and Matthew Tone, who were taken with them, were immediately hanged.

Napper Tandy, Lewines, and others of the Irish party at Paris, hearing that Humbert had sailed, had followed in a separate vessel, hoping to be in time for

the revolution which they expected to follow. At Rathlin Island they learnt that all was over, and they made their way out of reach of danger to Hamburg.

A month after Humbert had been disposed of Bompard and Hardy arrived on the coast. Hardy had three thousand men with him. The French squadron consisted of the 'Hoche,' a seventy-four gun ship, and eight frigates. On board the 'Hoche' was Wolfe Tone himself, not this time buoyant with hope as before, but with the shadow of his approaching fate upon him, and resolute to meet it.

They had sailed from Brest on the 20th of September. To avoid Sir John Warren, who was known to be on the watch for them, they made a long circuit into the Atlantic. They were separated in a storm; and on the 10th of October the 'Hoche' and three frigates found themselves alone at the mouth of Lough Swilly, with Warren in pursuit of them, and already in sight in the offing. The frigates, drawing little water, were able to escape through a shallow channel. Tone was entreated to fly with them, but he chose to remain. The 'Hoche' fought for six hours against four ships each as large as herself, and did not strike till she was sinking. Tone distinguished himself greatly in the action; and in his French uniform was not immediately recognised when the survivors of the crew were brought on shore as prisoners. He was known to have accompanied the expedition, but he was reported to have been killed, or he might

have escaped in one of the frigates. Curious inquiries were perhaps purposely avoided. The French officers were politely and hospitably received. They were invited to a breakfast by Lord Cavan; and Tone, who accompanied them, would have passed unnoticed at the table, had he not himself rashly spoken to an old acquaintance whom he encountered there. He was instantly arrested by Sir George Hill. He professed to expect that his French commission would protect him. He was painfully undeceived, and was ordered into irons as a traitor.

Not with dignity, but with the half-sincere heroics of its Irish counterfeit, he tore off his coat. 'These fetters,' he said, 'shall never degrade the revered insignia of the free nation which I have served. For the cause which I have embraced I feel prouder in my chains than if I was decorated with the Star and Garter of England.'

He was taken to Dublin, under an escort of dragoons, and was consigned to the soldiers' prison. If the forms of law had been observed, Wolfe Tone should have been tried at the King's Bench; but his rank in the French army, though not allowed to shield him, was held by a violent construction to place him under military jurisdiction, and on the 10th of November he was brought before a court where General Loftus sat as president.

He appeared in the full dress of a French officer, wearing the tricolour cockade. At first he was much agitated, but after calling for a glass of water he

became more composed. He had been taken in the act of bearing arms against his Sovereign, and his conviction was a matter of course. He therefore read for his defence a political effusion which he had composed as a justification of his conduct. He said that from his earliest youth he had regarded the connection with Great Britain as the bane of his country. He had laboured to break it, and had sought assistance wherever it could be found.

The president told him that his language was irrelevant, and would rather injure than serve him.

'In a cause like mine,' he continued, without attending to the check, 'success is everything. Success in the eyes of the vulgar is the test of merit. Washington succeeded; Kosciusko failed. I have forfeited my life. The Court will do its duty. I shall not be wanting to mine.'

Having been tried as a soldier, he begged that he might have a soldier's death. With an inconsistency which it would have been more seemly to avoid, the request was refused. He was sentenced to be hanged on the following morning, in front of the New Prison.

He did not care to figure in a scene which was merely ignominious. There was no time for an appeal, and in the night he cut his throat with a penknife. The wound, though severe, was not immediately mortal. It was dressed, and sufficient life was left in him to permit his being carried to the scaffold. The cart was prepared. The escort was already mounted at the prison-door. A spectacle

which could not have been other than revolting was prevented by the interference of Curran, who rose in the King's Bench, and declared that Tone, having held no commission under the British Crown, was not within the cognisance of a court-martial. The Judges agreed. The Sheriff was sent to the barracks, with a writ of Habeas Corpus, to claim possession of the prisoner. The Sheriff returned to say that he was too ill to be moved; but Curran's end was gained: the execution was put off; Tone lingered in pain for a week and then died.

## SECTION V.

THE ignominious story draws towards an end. The chief leaders of the insurrection were either dead or banished. Napper Tandy was arrested at <sup>1798</sup> Hamburg at the instance of the English Minister, sent to Ireland and tried, but was spared as too contemptible to be worth punishing. The other actors in the drama were cleared away, and their brief notoriety was ended. But the insurrection itself did not clear away. It had cost by this time many thousand lives.<sup>1</sup> But the agrarian murders continued unabated. The peasantry, savage in their misery, were unable to understand the Act of Amnesty, and, as Portland expected, attributed it to fear. Again and again the Viceroy flattered himself that he had gained his end: again and again he bewailed his disappointment. The frenzy slackened only to burst out again with renewed and more widely spread destructiveness. The courts-martial were suspended, but he was compelled to revert to them; and a system of alternate blows and caresses—the least promising which could be pursued either with the Irish or any other human beings—was the chief outcome of the humane effort of Lord Cornwallis.

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<sup>1</sup> Plowden estimates the number killed on both sides as nearly 70,000, but this is probably a great exaggeration.

‘The rebellion in Ireland,’ said Lord Clare, speaking, in 1801, in the British House of Lords for the further continuance of martial law, ‘is of a nature unparalleled in the history of the world. It did not proceed from mistaken loyalty, religious zeal, or party difference; all principle had been corrupted, every laudable feeling had been extirpated, and nothing prevailed but treason, blood, and cowardly assassination. Though vanquished in the field, it was not subdued. It existed long before. It exists still. Lord Cornwallis did all that could be done by man; but to think of repressing such a spirit by coaxing, concession, and indulgence is absurd.’

Cornwallis found his life as Viceroy ‘his idea of perfect misery.’ His failure to restore quiet never led him to mistrust his own judgment. He was confident as ever that Clare and Kilwarden and Toler and Carleton were blind, and that he alone saw clearly. He discerned the cause of the ill-success of conciliation to be the want of completeness in Catholic Emancipation; and as it was clearly impossible to introduce Catholics into a separate Irish Legislature, he now directed all his energies towards carrying the Act of Union.

The Parliamentary Union was indeed most necessary, but not chiefly or at all for the sake of Catholic Emancipation. The remedy which Ireland required was not additional liberty, but a firm, impartial, and peremptory Government; and the admission of the Catholics to the united Legislature would be useful

or mischievous so far only as it did or did not conduce to that indispensable end. A Constitution professing to be national and representative from which four-fifths of the nation was excluded, was an intolerable absurdity; but the error lay in having inflicted such an instrument of government upon Ireland at all, rather than in having refused to remodel it upon conditions which would have rendered it only the more unendurable. The argument for a Union was the proved impossibility of so much as commencing the reformation of Ireland so long as a separate Legislature existed there. From the moment at which the Irish Parliament discovered its power of embarrassing the Administration, it became the fertile mother of every kind of disorder and demoralisation. The inconvenience of an adverse vote compelled Government to corrupt the members, and led the members to insist on being corrupted. The public departments were sacrificed to jobbery. Public morality was debauched and poisoned. The scandal and shame gave point to the declamations of agitators, and a show of seeming reason to the periodic explosions of patriotism. An Independent Parliament kept alive the dream of an independent nationality, and the result had been an eruption of the Irish volcano in a stream of horror and ferocity.

So long as the cause continued the same, effects would necessarily repeat themselves. In 1704 the Irish Parliament had petitioned for incorporation. The request had been refused on unworthy and dishonourable grounds; and reluctance afterwards on



both sides had prevented the renewal of the suggestion as a question of practical politics, till the rebellion had made serious men on both sides of the Channel feel that Ireland was too dangerous a subject to be any longer trifled with.

A Union would not of itself secure good government, or prevent Ireland's interests from being sacrificed to Parliamentary manœuvres. Unprincipled Ministers playing on the ignorance of the public might still make a party cry of justice to Ireland, and carry measures which they knew to be mischievous, to maintain themselves in power by the Irish vote. A Union would not necessarily put an end to the scandalous misappropriation of patronage, or prevent the appointment to offices of trust and consequence of men whose fitter place would have been a penal settlement.

But at least it would remove an institution the continuance of which in any shape was fatal to the possibility of amendment. So long as an Irish Parliament controlled the Irish finances the Administration would remain at its mercy, and could only carry on the Government by means as disgraceful to one country as ruinous to the interests of the other.

The influences by which the Act of Union was carried are notorious, and there is no occasion to dwell upon a subject on which too much stress has been laid. For fifty years a seat in the Irish Parliament had been regarded either as a passport to promotion and rank, or as securing to its occupant a lien on

the Irish revenues in the form of a pension or sinecure. The Noble Lords who returned nine or ten members to the Lower House received, as the price of support to the Crown, the patronage of their respective districts; and either provided by means of it for needy members of their families, or sold the appointments in their gift to the highest bidder. The system had been carried on so long and so unblushingly, it had been so completely sanctioned by the successive Administrations who had been parties to the bargain, that the sense of disgrace had disappeared. When they were called on to consent to the suppression of two-thirds of the Irish representatives, and the transfer of the remaining third to the Imperial Parliament, the Irish patrons were in fact required to surrender not only their consequence in the State, but a considerable part of their fortunes. The seats for their private boroughs entered into the value of their estates, and had been paid for by themselves or their fathers; and the sacrifice of them to men already embarrassed, as most of them were, by extravagant expenditure was equivalent to ruin. They had the control of the situation in their hands, and it was not to be expected that persons who had risen into weight and influence mainly by corruption should ascend suddenly into a nobler sphere of patriotic self-devotion. They insisted on compensation for the destruction of their property, and they fought against the Union till their respective claims had been weighed and admitted. Cornwallis laboured patiently at a work which he detested. At

one time he hoped to overcome or weaken the opposition by the help of the Catholics, but the Catholics would not listen to his blandishments. They trusted if the separate Parliament was maintained to make their way into it eventually; and though England had saved them from extermination by their Protestant countrymen, yet as long as there was a hope of success, they preferred to join the Protestant opposition in defence of their natural independence.<sup>1</sup>

The demands of the borough patrons increased with the eagerness of the Government. 'I long,' wrote the unhappy Viceroy, 'to kick those whom my public duty obliges me to court. My occupation is to negotiate and job with the most corrupt people under heaven. I despise and hate myself every hour for engaging in such dirty work, and am supported only by the reflection that without a Union the British Empire must be dissolved. Nothing but a conviction that a Union is absolutely necessary could make me endure the shocking task which is imposed upon me.'<sup>2</sup>

The 'dirty work,' after two years' defilement with

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<sup>1</sup> 'The opposition to the Union increases daily. I was too sanguine when I hoped for the good inclination of the Catholics. Their dispositions are so completely alienated from the British Government, that I believe they would even be tempted to join with their bitterest enemies, the Protestants of Ireland, if they thought that measure would lead to a total separation of the two countries.'—'Cornwallis to Portland, December 12, 1798.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Cornwallis to General Ross, May 20 and June 8, 1799.'

it, was at length completed, mainly through the exertions of Lord Castlereagh; and the Irish Parliament, which had been barely tolerable when controlled by Poyning's Act — which, under the Constitution of 1782, became the most mischievous parody of a representative Legislature which the world has ever seen—closed its dishonoured existence.<sup>1</sup> One only remarkable feature gave interest to the debates which preceded and accompanied its fall. Let statesmen who dream of reviving, under any pretence, a separate Parliament for Ireland study the speech of Lord Clare delivered in the Irish House of Lords on the 10th of February, 1800. It lasted for four hours. The substance of it was a summary of Irish history from the Reformation to the present rebellion, and was distinguished, like all else which came from Clare, by keen, unspareful truthfulness. Ireland had been fed too long upon illusions. 'We have for twenty years been in a fever of intoxication,' he said, 'and must be stunned into sobriety.' He delineated alternately the negligence and tyranny of England,<sup>2</sup> 'the insanity of the English colony, which in an evil hour separated itself from the English nation;' the blind but not

<sup>1</sup> Act of Union finally passed through the British Parliament, July 2, 1800.

<sup>2</sup> Clare strongly condemned the whole of the past English policy to Ireland, and the chief credit which he allowed her was her interference to save the Catholics in 1798.

Speaking of the rebellion of 1641, he called it a war of extermination. 'The rebellion of 1798,' he said, 'would have been a war of extermination also, if it had not been for the strong and merciful interposition of Great Britain.'

unnatural rage of the old inhabitants who saw the stranger in possession of their inheritance, and sullenly brooded over their wrongs. He passed to the Constitution of '82, described its origin, and explained its workings. He showed that in peace it made corruption a necessity, that in war it led inevitably to rebellion.

There are those who imagine that a Union between Great Britain and Ireland might be formed on the same principle which connects Great Britain with her larger colonial dependencies, on the principle of 'unity of the Executive with complete independence of the Legislature.' Our self-governed colonies remain attached to us because they are willing to remain. If through their Legislatures they expressed a desire to part from us, both parties know that a separation could be effected without vital injury either to the colony or to the mother country. If the majority of the inhabitants of the Canadian Dominion were of the same disposition as the majority (numerically) of the inhabitants of Ireland, the connection would be dissolved; or if maintained would be maintained by force only, with the suspension or overthrow of the Colonial Constitution. The vicinity of Ireland has forbidden us hitherto to contemplate separation as a possibility. Great Britain cannot sacrifice the integrity of her existence to the pleasure of a numerical majority of the Irish people. We have been compelled to retain them as subjects of the Crown, whether they consent or object; and therefore to restore an independent Legislature in Dublin

would bring back the necessity of controlling it by the same methods which prevailed before the Union. The experiment has been tried. Let Lord Clare describe the results:—

‘Between two countries equal in power such a connection could not exist for an hour. Its existence must depend on the admitted inferiority and marked subordination of one of them. Ireland is that inferior country; and call the Constitution independent, dignify it by any other high-sounding title in the Irish vocabulary, hers must be a provincial government, and of the worst description—a government maintained, not by the avowed exercise of legitimate authority, but by a permanent and commanding influence of the English Executive in the Councils of Ireland, as a necessary substitute for it. If there be not an implicit concurrence by Ireland in every Imperial Act of the Crown which has the sanction of the British Parliament, and in every article of British legislation on Imperial subjects, there is an end of our connection with the British nation; and I repeat that the only security which can by possibility exist for their national concurrence is a permanent commanding influence of the English Cabinet in the Irish Council. Such a connection is formed, not for mutual strength and security, but for mutual debility. It is a connection of distinct minds and distinct interests, generating national discontent, and perpetuating faction and misrule in the inferior country. The first obvious disadvantage to Ireland is, that in

every department of the State every other consideration must yield to Parliamentary power. Let the misconduct of any public officer be what it may, if he is supported by a powerful parliamentary interest he is too strong for the King's representative. A majority in the Parliament of Great Britain will defeat the Minister of the day. A majority in the Parliament of Ireland against the King's Government goes directly to separate the kingdom from the British Crown. If it continues, separation or war is the inevitable issue; and therefore it is that the general Executive of the Empire, so far as it is essential to retain Ireland a member of it, is at the mercy of the Irish Parliament. It is vain to expect, so long as man continues to be a creature of passion and interest, that he will not avail himself of the critical and difficult situation in which the Executive Government of this kingdom must ever remain under its present Constitution, to demand favours of the Crown, not as the reward of loyalty and service, but as the stipulated price to be paid in advance in discharge of a public duty. Every unprincipled and noisy adventurer who can achieve the means of putting himself forward commences his political career on an avowed speculation of profit and loss; and if he fails to negotiate his political job, will endeavour to extort it by faction and sedition, and with unblushing effrontery will fasten his own corruption on the King's Ministers. English influence is the inexhaustible theme for popular irritation and distrust. Our

present connection, therefore, must continue to generate national discontent and perpetuate faction and misgovernment.

‘If we are to pursue the beaten course of faction and folly, I have no scruple to say it were better for Great Britain that Ireland should sink into the sea than continue attached to the British Crown on the terms of our present connection. Our difficulties arise from an Irish war—a war of faction, a Whig war, a United Irishmen’s war. It has been demanded, how are we to be relieved by a Union? I answer, we are to be relieved from British and Irish faction, which is the prime source of all our calamities. When I look at the squalid misery of the mass of the Irish people I am sickened with the rant of Irish dignity and independence. I hope I feel as becomes a true Irishman for the dignity and independence of my country. I would therefore elevate her to her proper station in the rank of civilised nations. I would advance her from the degraded post of a mercenary province to the proud station of an integral and governing member of the greatest empire in the world’



## SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

### CONCLUSION.

I HAVE written the history of the government of Ireland by a Protestant Parliament of its own—how it began, how it was carried on, and why it failed and came to an end. Lord Clare believed that with the Union a fairer future was opening before his country. Eighty years have passed over us since the events described in the last chapter; and the wheel has once more come round, and the Irish problem is before us in the old form. Ireland stands again before the world calling herself poor and miserable, and accusing the English connection as the occasion of her wretchedness: English authority is again paralysed; English law is superseded by a code which the people have created for themselves; and the will of the people is enforced by the familiar methods of assassination, mutilation, and terrorism. For seven centuries English rule has lasted there, and this is the result. The words which the Pander wrote in 1515 may be repeated in 1880 with scarcely more change than in the spelling—

‘What might the King do more than he hath done? Some say the King is the cause of all the war and rebellion, and of all the vices and evil deeds that grow of the same, because he beareth the cure and the charge temporal under God of all the lands, and he has been reckless thereof, and did not look thereto nor cast eye thereon, and in default thereof the land is as it is.

‘What danger is it to the King to suffer his land to be of the said disorder so long! It were more honour and worship to surrender his claim thereto, and make no longer prosecution thereof . . . . The herd must account for his folk, and the King for his.’<sup>1</sup>

‘What might the King do more than he hath done?’ Norman feudalism was tried, and it became anarchy. Protestant ascendancy was tried, and a Prime Minister has told us that it has been a Upas-tree. Parliamentary government under a Union has been tried: it has given rights to the peasant occupiers of Ireland which are neither possessed nor claimed by any tenantry in any part of the world; yet the result is still the same.

The Pander’s inference again forces itself upon us. We cannot remedy the ‘disorder;’ we are ashamed to suppress it; ‘It were more honour and worship to surrender our claim and make no longer prosecution thereof.’

If it were true that we could find no remedy,—if it

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State of Ireland, and Plan for its Reformation. State Papers, Hen. VIII. vol. 1.

were true that our failure was due to some cause which we were unable to discover,—the conclusion would indeed be irresistible. All things have their appointed end, and English dominion over Ireland must come to an end also. And yet the cause is so plain that there is scarcely a man in either country who does not know what it is. We have professed to govern, and we have not governed or tried to govern, except at intervals so brief that our attempts were as if written upon water. We have sought to reconcile the Irish people to their loss of independence by leaving them to licence. There has never been a time since the first conquest when equitable laws, impartially and inexorably administered, would not have given Ireland peace, and with peace prosperity and liberty. ‘All nations desire liberty,’ said a wise Indian officer; ‘but they do not mean the same thing by it. The English mean by liberty the right to govern themselves, and they think it tyranny to govern them. An Asiatic means by it, that he has a right to be governed. He would hold it the worst of tyrannies to force him to govern himself . . . and you must govern him well, or he will cut your throat.’ As the Asiatics are, so are the Irish. An Englishman would revolt against a despotism, however just the despotism might be. The Irishman is instinctively loyal to an authority which is not afraid to assert itself. He respects courage; he despises cowardice. Rule him resolutely, and he will not rebel; rule him justly, and he will follow you to the world’s end.

The Union gave us another opportunity; a few pages

will describe the use which we have made of it. The past was beyond reparation. In 1704, when a Union was offered and refused by us, there were tens of thousands of skilled Protestants in Ireland. There was enterprise and hope in the gentry; and water-power equal to that of England. In 1801 the steam-engine had superseded the water-wheel. The manufacturing monopoly was in the hands of those who had coal and iron, and Ireland had neither. The Sibyl's book had lost half its pages. But there was the land crying to be cultivated, and the people crying for employment. The country, in the Duke of Wellington's words, had been left half conquered. There were still conspiracies, and local riots, and midnight visitations and murders. But the nationalist spirit had been stunned. Napoleon, who had never cared much for Irish rebels, thought no more of them; and no help was to be looked for elsewhere. The peasantry, naturally good-humoured, enlisted in the English army, fought its battles and shared its glory. A little effort, a little foresight, a little evidence, on England's part, that she had recognised her own sins, and for the future would turn a new leaf, might, at that moment, have completed the work which the sword had left unfinished.

Parliamentary governments, unfortunately, great as are their other excellences, are incapable, from their nature, of sustained and consistent administration. They are suited well for people who understand their own affairs, and do not need to be interfered with; for others such governments are not suited at all.

England was busy with its wars with Napoleon. It had had enough of Ireland, and wished to hear no more of it. The Irish Parliament was gone, with its chronic fever, and had ceased to be troublesome. In the place of it were the Irish members at Westminster, and the problem of English Cabinets was thenceforward not to improve the management of Ireland, but to make sure of their majorities and manage the Irish representatives. To enforce law and order, to punish outrage on one side and oppression on the other, could not be done without offence to individuals. The patriotic members would object to a vigorous police system; the aristocracy and gentry would object to being interfered with by intrusive Government Commissioners. Any active course which might be taken might lose a vote or a group of votes. There was no immediate danger, and it was easier, simpler, and more practical to revert to the old methods. One party in the State was not more guilty than the other. To both alike it seemed the just, right, and natural thing to do.

The Tories, who had carried the Union, had the first innings. How their patronage was used shall be illustrated in a remarkable instance. In 1802 an Irish Bishopric fell vacant, and Mr. Addington nominated a member of a certain great Irish family, whose support was of importance to him. The name is of no consequence, but the appointment itself was startling enough to call for a remonstrance from the Primate, which shall be given in his own words. Comment on them will be unnecessary:—

‘I affirm, on my honour, that I object to — upon public grounds only. Emolument is the only object of this young man, whose character is indisputably infamous. His promotion would, in my opinion, be fatal to the Church Establishment. It exposes us to ridicule and contempt. It encourages the profligacy of manners already too prevalent in Ireland; and it holds forth to the young men of this country that morals are of no estimation in the opinion of the English Ministers. My understanding suggests no surer method of destroying the Church than by placing irreligious and profligate men in those situations where the people have a right to expect examples of piety and virtue. I will not pursue the subject further, but beg the favour, if the appointment is persisted in, to lay my humble request before his Majesty that he will allow me to resign a situation which I can no longer hold with advantage to the public or credit to myself.

‘W. ARMAGH.’

So much for the Tories, who, it may be added, did persist in the appointment of “this young man of notoriously infamous character.” The Whigs, when their turn came, selected for advancement the persons who had done most to bring about the rebellion, without actively taking part in it, and had used every means in their power, during its progress, to paralyse the Executive Government. George Ponsonby was made the Irish Chancellor; Curran, Master of the Rolls; and Moira (“the rainbow after the storm”), Master-General of the Ordnance and Governor-

General of India. The Tories encouraged personal profligacy; the Whigs, the political insanity which was Ireland's most peculiar curse. It was not a hopeful beginning for the new era. Irish disaffection did not need to be taught that in the opinion of one of the great parties in England rebellion was justified by the cruelty and violence of the Protestant gentry. If the Government had informed the mutinous seamen at the Nore that the fault was with their officers, yet had left those officers at their posts and had sent the fleet to sea with grievances unredressed, if,—in addition, they had selected for reward and advancement the mutineers' advocates and friends, they would have acted precisely as Mr. Fox acted towards Ireland in these appointments.

Where government is carried on by a conflict of principles, the representatives of rival opinions must in turn be promoted. It is a necessary consequence of our Parliamentary system. It might answer in England: in Ireland it could not answer; for the disposition of the two peoples was essentially different. Tories and Whigs had struck, both of them, into the wrong road. Both perhaps knew in their hearts whither such a road must lead; but it was immediately convenient, and the end might be far off, and the price might have to be paid by a generation which was then unborn.

Meanwhile, socially and internally the Union worked only mischief. In the last century Ireland had an intellectual life. Besides her popular orators, she produced

artists, men of letters, statesmen, soldiers, the best of which the empire had to boast. Society was never anywhere perhaps more brilliant than in Dublin in the years which succeeded 1782. The great Peers and Commoners had cast their lot with the national life. They had their castles in the country and their town houses in the Irish metropolis. Their lives had a public purpose. They were conscious of high responsibilities; and if they were not always wise they had force and dignity of character. With the Union all was changed. The centre of political life had been removed to England, and men who had intellect and ambition followed it. The high-born and the fashionable cared less than ever for the second-rate attractions of a provincial city. The rebellion, and the way in which the rebellion had been treated, had disgusted the gentry, and disgusted most the best of them. They were not afraid, but they resented the stain which Cornwallis had left upon their conduct, which they knew to be undeserved; and they did not care to remain in a country where they were no longer trusted by the Government, and where their relations with their people were embittered. The imperfect conquest had left the lawless spirit cowed but unsubdued. Insurrection acts remained on the Statute-book, but as a threat not as a reality, and life was still insecure. Persons of orderly habits went away; they left their estates to be managed by agents, or let in leases for lives to middlemen. If the middlemen ground the peasantry into wretchedness, the landlord did not see it, and did not need to think of



it; for if the terms which he granted himself were equitable, the responsibility was no longer his, but another's. He received his rents, and asked no questions. There had always been absenteeism in Ireland; but the absenteeism now was of a deadlier kind, for it carried away all those who should have been the best supports of English authority, the best representatives of English habits and English thought. History was curiously repeating itself. In the 15th century those only of the Norman families remained who had adopted Irish customs, and put on the Irish character. In the 19th, the most energetic of the Protestant aristocracy turned their backs upon a land associated only with ignominious memories, and forgot it in a more congenial home. Among those who stayed there were still a few splendid exceptions of men who knew their duty, and struggled to do it. But the majority were such as could best adapt themselves to the ways of the country—the drinking, hunting, swearing, duel-fighting squires of too-famous memory.

With these, better far than with the improving landlords who fought against the evil of the times, the Irish peasantry agreed. They were kindly and open-hearted, generous to their dependents, while reckless and extravagant themselves. Careless of expense, deep in debt, they lived for the day that was passing over them, and left the morrow to provide for itself. The squire's castle was the peasant's cabin on a larger scale. His younger sons went into the army, into the professions or the universities.

Better soldiers we had none. As lawyers, as clergy, as men of letters, they rose to eminence and honour. In the brightest pages of the British annals Irish names stand foremost. The Nationalists, who are now denouncing them, are not ashamed to claim an interest in the Wellesleys, and Napiers, and Moores, and Wolseleys. But at home, at least in the western counties, the old type prevailed; for few, but those with whom it agreed, cared to remain there. In Antrim and Down, in Meath and Dublin and Wicklow, where the 'hoof of the Saxon' had been firmly planted, better order prevailed; but in the central counties and along the Atlantic coast, from Kerry to Donegal, there was a semi-savage feudalism which, after the rebellion had been crushed, was maintained without resistance so long as the word improvement was never heard of. Each year the landowners grew more embarrassed; but the potato thrived, and the people multiplied. Three acres of 'garden' would keep a family alive. A few hours of labour would build four walls of mud, throw a roof of turf over it, with a hole to let out the smoke; and there human beings, and pigs and cows and poultry, littered together and increased together. The owner was well pleased, for his rents grew with his difficulties. The priests encouraged boys and girls to marry in their teens, to prevent immorality. No question was ever asked in Parliament about all this, or if ventured, was set aside as unpractical. It was the day of *Laissez faire*. Everybody was the best judge of

his private interests, and might do as he pleased with his own.

So matters went economically; and beneath it the sacred flame of Irish tradition was still secretly burning—the hatred of the foreigner, the memory that the land occupied by the stranger had belonged to the ancestors of those who now worked upon it as serfs—the hope intensely cherished that it would one day be their own once more. Catholic Emancipation had not been allowed to sleep. The promotion of the patriot orators told the Catholic congregations that they had friends in England. Their opportunity would come, and they prepared for it; and when the war with France was over, and Whig theories of liberty were taking shape in a cry for Reform, the admission of the Catholics into Parliament was the first question which was pressed to the front.

If Ireland was to be under Parliamentary Government at all, it was obvious that four-fifths of the population could not permanently be disqualified by their creed. The principle had been decided when the Catholics were allowed the franchise. There is, indeed, no instance in history where a half-conquered people, still nursing their resentment, have been induced by a gift of self-government to govern themselves agreeably to their conqueror's pleasure. They may be subdued, they may submit to force, and when acquiescence has become a habit, may then be trusted with liberty. But privileges conceded while the irritation is still glowing are likely to be used to

make the conqueror's position uneasy to him. This is human nature, and is confirmed by general experience. Ireland, it was hoped, might form an exception to the rule. At any rate the experiment was to be tried. There were the usual promises of eternal gratitude, the usual assurances that, this point granted, Irish loyalty would be secured for ever. The usual methods were adopted also to quicken public attention and force a concession from the Parliament. Munster and Connaught were armed and organised for another rebellion. The same symptoms reappeared which had preceded the insurrection of 1798, and England was given to understand that she must choose between emancipation and civil war. England decided to yield. It was the old story—'All Ireland cannot govern the Earl of Kildare, then let the Earl of Kildare govern all Ireland.' The Catholics were emancipated; the Reform Bill followed. Half the representation was lost to the owners of the Irish soil, and the Roman Church, with O'Connell as general of its forces, became a power in the State. Now at length there was equal justice, and the Irish millennium would begin in earnest.

Yet no millennium came, or seemed like coming. Lord Clare had said that to suppose the Catholic Irish could be reconciled to England by indulgence was ignorance or insanity. No symptoms appeared to show that Clare had been mistaken. The Castle Government became the humble subject of the Roman hierarchy; the Irish patronage was given over to O'Connell; yet

the people grew poorer and poorer, and the country more miserable. Emancipation was found to be not enough without an Irish Parliament with a Catholic majority, and the cry rose for a repeal of the Union. O'Connell was not sincere about repeal: he knew that in his day at least it could never be. English statesmen, even the more advanced, were still in bondage to old ideas and traditions. But it answered his purpose to keep the volcano smoking. O'Connell and his followers held the balance between parties at Westminster. He forced the Whigs to give him whatever he might please to ask for; and he prevented them from interfering with Irish anarchy. The Catholic Church owed much to him; the people less than nothing. No practical good thing, not even the smallest, ever came to the Irish peasant from his glorious Liberator. Emancipation and agitation might make the fortunes of patriotic orators, and make the Castle tremble before the Catholic Archbishops; but they drained no bogs, filled no hungry stomachs or patched the rags in which the squalid millions were shivering; and still the potato multiplied, the people multiplied, and beggary multiplied along with them. O'Connell cared no more for the poor than the harshest of Protestant absentees. The more millions that he could claim as behind him, the mightier he seemed. His own estates at Derrynane and Cahirciveen were as naked, as neglected, as subdivided, as littered with ragged crowds depending on a single root for their subsistence, as any other in the county to which he belonged.

Such was Ireland in the years which followed Emancipation. The political influence of the Protestant landowners was fading away. Their power over their estates was left. They were like officers forbidden to keep discipline or use authority, but permitted to make a personal profit on their men's rations. In 1840 the population was over eight millions; by 1845 it was supposed to have risen nearly to nine—two millions of them without so much as a potato-field, and supported, one way or another, by charity. I at this time knew Ireland intimately; I remember the potato in its glory, and the muck-heap of existence where the pigs and their owners kept house together; the singular intelligence in the midst of helplessness, the humour and seeming good nature, yet along with it, among the women especially, expressions both in face and language that were ominous and startling. It was an evil scene pregnant with growing mischief. With the gentry, the natural leaders of these poor people, I found everywhere the warmest hospitality, yet seldom a consciousness that things were not as they ought to be. In some there was a strong religious element, but not of a kind which would bring their tenants closer to them. In illustration of what the rest were I will describe a single scene. I was staying at Castle —, in — county. My host, partly on my own account, invited the neighbours from twenty miles round to a great luncheon-party. More than a hundred came, squires and squires' sons and brothers, large leaseholders, the Protestant chiefs of the district; there

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they sat, light-hearted, laughing, careless, the stuff out of whom had been made the Volunteers of 1782, but all changed now, with no thought of politics, with little serious thought at all; most of them in debt to their necks, but taking life lightly as it came, too wise to spoil the moment by troubling themselves about future possibilities. A Scotch grazier, come across on business, was sitting at my side. He said to me, 'You see the gentry of the county of ——. There is not more than one person here present who supposes that he was sent into the world for any purpose except to hunt, shoot, and fish, and enjoy himself. Poor fellows!—they will find before long that this was not what God Almighty intended with them at all.' They found it out even sooner than he could have expected. The next year the potato failed, and the social constitution of Ireland was shattered to pieces.

We had been boasting of our progress and our civilisation. A famine was at our doors on a scale like those which periodically desolate provinces of India. Had Ireland been as well cultivated as Belgium it could not have fed properly the population which then existed in it; and the food of four-fifths of them was suddenly swept away. No preparation had been made to meet an unexpected strain. There were no poor-houses, no adequate poor-laws. Want was followed by fever, and there were no hospitals. The poor wretches had but to lie down and die. Hundreds of thousands perished. Tens of hundreds of thousands fled from the country, as if it

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was struck with a curse. The Protestant exodus of the last century was followed by a Catholic exodus on a yet vaster scale. England voted ten millions, and exerted herself to send food ; but the food was insufficient, and most of the money was wasted. There was no gratitude ; and as Ireland grew articulate, of course she laid her sufferings on England. An Irish Catholic Bishop said bitterly to me, that every death lay at England's door. England, it seemed, was expected to work a miracle, like the multiplication of the bread at the Sea of Galilee. Yet what the Bishop said was true, after all. The condition of things which made such a calamity possible was due essentially to those who had undertaken the government of Ireland, and had left Ireland to her own devices. The conviction fastened itself into the Irish national mind on both sides of the Atlantic ; and there it rests, and will rest.

The first consequence was the ' Young Ireland ' insurrection. In 1848 Europe was in revolution. The dream revived of help from France, and an embassy went to the Provisional Government at Paris. Lamartine answered with words. He had other work on hand. The rebellion collapsed ; its leaders were exiled, fresh victims of England's tyranny ; while England herself talked of economic laws, and congratulated herself that nature had interfered and relieved the pressure of a too redundant population. Economic laws acted indeed, and acted to some purpose. Gentlemen like those I had seen at — were ruined. They had barely lived before ; the poor-rate ended them. The

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Encumbered Estates Act threw their property into the market. Their lands were bought, amidst the acclamation of the London newspapers, mainly by Irishmen themselves. Irish soil was to be owned now by its own people, solvent and, it was hoped, industrious. Now at last all would be well.

Yet it was not well, and was not likely to be well. A change, meanwhile, had come over the proprietors who had lived out the storm. They had allowed subdivision on their farms as long as it was profitable. It was seen now that if they intended to escape destruction themselves, and improve the condition of their people, the subdivision must cease, and that the starving wretches who could find no food in Ireland must be removed elsewhere. The road to America had been opened, and the voluntary emigration was followed by a compulsory one. The small holdings were thrown together. The population was diminished by three millions, while over vast districts of the West wrecked villages and roofless cabins stood as monuments of the consequences of leaving such a people as the Irish like sheep without a shepherd, and as enduring preachers of resentment and disaffection. Inevitable! the economist answers. The laws of nature must be obeyed. The laws of nature, it seems, are the only laws which carry force in Ireland. It was a law of nature that the people should increase like rabbits while the potato flourished, and perish like rabbits when the potato failed. The economist sees no objection; but if there are natural laws there are also spiritual laws, and by the action of

these spiritual laws there are now five million Catholic Irish citizens in the United States, whose one hope is to revenge the long agony of their fatherland on guilty England.

The evictions were carried out gently or harshly according to the humour of the landlords. The main part of the cost of emigration was supplied by those who went to America first, saved money out of their wages, and sent it home to bring out their friends. When funds from this source were forthcoming, the landlords probably supplied nothing. To the friendless who had no such refuge, most of the old landowners, especially the great English proprietors, were humane and generous. They could not allow the poor creatures to remain and starve on their estates, but they paid their passage money and were otherwise considerate and liberal. The Irish purchasers under the Encumbered Estates Act, with a minority of the rest, were ruthless. Such masters, from immemorial time, have been the tyrants of their own people. The coyn and livery, the cess and coshering, of the chiefs had reappeared in the rent-contractors, tithe-proctors and middlemen of the last century. They had now come again upon the scene in a new shape, bringing no golden age as the newspapers had hoped, but in their old humour. They had bought their lands as a money speculation, and a money speculation they intended to make it. They bought cheap, because the land was burdened with paupers. They flung them out, to sink or swim, live or die. Where a tenant by his own labour had drained and fenced, had built cabin and cattle-shed,

and had made bog or mountain grow grass to feed cows, his rent was raised on him, or he too was ordered to go. The law gave his improvements, not to him, but to his landlord.

There was, indeed, another side to the story. There were landlords who wished to improve, and tenants who would not be improved, out of whom no good could be made, and by whom no good would be done, slovenly, idle, and worthless. Power to dismiss the incapable from situations for which they are unfit is a first condition of tolerable management; but injustice there had been—injustice rising out of opportunities created by English law. The remedy was not a change in the law which would take away discretionary authority and protect equally the deserving and the ill-deserving, but the establishment of courts to which the tenants might appeal. It was the old story: Ireland needed governing, and that need was exactly the one which England could never bring herself to supply.

England will never touch Ireland except under pressure of agitation; she then finds something must be done; she does the "something" in a hurry to get rid of the subject, and she finds that she has created more harm than she has cured. So it was proving with the Encumbered Estates Act. If English statesmen had been left undisturbed, they would have rested on their political economy. They would have been sorry for the Irish, but they would have consoled themselves by reflecting that certain things could not be helped. The manufacturer, when bad times came, turned off his

workmen, to find employment or starve. He did not hold himself bound to pay their passage to America. The Irish were freemen, not serfs, and it was the privilege of freemen to take care of themselves.

The exiles and their friends who were left behind proceeded to take care of themselves in their own way. Evictions without compensation, after all, had been relatively few; but they were made to colour the entire revolution which had been caused by the famine. Every Irishman who had gone to the United States was taught to believe that he had been driven there by English tyranny. A new conspiracy sprang up, Fenian, so-called, cross-bred out of the Irish at home and the Irish Americans, to make an end of the English connection. If the Alabama question had not been settled, something serious might have come of it. The American Government was exasperated with us, and the Irish vote was powerful. In default of encouragement from across the Atlantic, Fenianism was stamped out; but it had developed new symptoms. It had shown that the animosity of the Irish nationalist against England was as violent as in 1798; and it had shown that Irish disaffection might again find sympathy abroad. It was true that under the Land Act of 1860 the Irish tenant was better protected than the English, and that the unfairness, where unfairness there had been, could never be repeated. But the attempt on Chester Castle and the Clerkenwell explosion awoke a fresh fit of impatience, a demand for another "something," which Mr. Gladstone was brought

into office to provide. The Irish people were assumed to have a real grievance. Agitators, it was said, took advantage of it to stir the chronic discontent with English rule. Let the grievances be removed, and they would be satisfied and loyal. For a hundred years this had been the theory of the English Liberal party. The events so far had not corresponded to it, for the whole history of the century had been a history of concession, and the discontent was wide and defiant as ever. The attempt, however, was to be made once more. The English people do not see that to remove even just grounds of complaint is made useless by the form in which the concession is made. They never legislate beforehand with a desire to be just; they wait for rebellion or danger of it, and then they yield without dignity and without deliberation. What they give is accepted without gratitude, and is regarded only as a victory won in the campaign which is being fought for the independence of Ireland.

Mr. Gladstone began with an acknowledgment, for which he has been violently blamed, that the Clerkenwell explosion had enabled him to deal with the Irish problem. It is seldom wrong to speak the truth plainly. One thing however Mr. Gladstone did not see, that he was passing a sentence of death upon the government of Ireland by a Union Parliament. A system under which the claims of justice admittedly will not be considered till they are backed up by treason and murder cannot continue. Nature herself will not permit it. Mr. Gladstone was telling the world that as

feudalism had failed, and Protestant ascendancy had failed, so the attempt to rule Ireland by a Parliament sitting at Westminster had failed also, and had failed even more signally and more disgracefully. Unconscious of the meaning of the words which he had uttered, he indicated equally innocently the nature of the system which was to succeed it. Ireland he told us was to be governed henceforth by 'Irish Ideas.' Irish ideas, in the only form in which they could force themselves upon the legislature, were the ideas of those who most hated England and everything English, who defied the law as it stood, and enforced their own rival laws, with knife and bullet. The enemies of English law and English order were the masters of the peasantry, and with the intended lowering of the Irish franchise would completely command the representation. The future functions of the English government therefore would be merely to register the orders of its deadliest foes, and to carry them out with the strength of the Empire if the section of society generally considered the most reputable should venture to resist.

Such an arrangement as this would probably be shorter lived than its predecessors.

Mr. Gladstone proceeded: There had been unjust evictions in Ireland before 1860, and actual wrong which was alleged to exist or to have existed. The proper course would have been to look into the particular circumstances and to ascertain who had been the wrong-doers. But Mr. Gladstone's large purpose was to go at once to the root of the whole disorder. *Lex non*

*curat de minimis*. He could not stay for trifles. He discerned that the bottom of it all was Protestant ascendancy. That was the upas tree which had poisoned Ireland, the upas tree with its three branches, the Church, the Land, and the Education. No doubt if 'Irish ideas' are henceforth to prevail in Ireland, the Protestant clergy, the landed gentry, and intelligent persons educated in Protestant colleges and universities are the most serious obstacles in the way of them. On the other hand, if the first of Irish ideas be to break the connection with England, and if the object of all the agitation be as Lord Clare said it was, to weaken those obstacles as the way to final victory, then the upas tree metaphor and the policy based upon it (supposing we desire the connection to be maintained) was to sacrifice the only friends whom we possessed in the island as a prelude to the struggle for the sovereignty. It was to do ourselves, precisely what Tyrconnell and the Irish Parliament of 1690 attempted to do and made the conquest so costly and so bloody to the Revolution government. From this point of view it would have seemed wiser rather to purge the Protestant element of its unwholesome features than to humiliate it before its enemies.

The Anglo-Irish Church had not prospered in Ireland. It had been a mistake from the first. It was useless as an instrument of conversion. It had divided the Protestant interest. In the days of its strength it had persecuted out of the island the Presbyterian settlers. Yet after all was said, for its worst failings

England had been herself to blame; if the Irish clergy had been a legion of angels, the distribution of church patronage would have brought them down to the level of erring mortals. At the time when they were put to the bar for judgment, they had extricated themselves from their shame. For the last fifty years there had been no body of men in the whole Empire who had been doing their duty more loyally and admirably. The peasantry, even the Catholic peasantry, loved and trusted them. They had ceased to be a grievance. There was no cry for their disestablishment. No one had asked for it, no one had wished for it, except perhaps the Catholic hierarchy; and the authorities at the Castle can say how far the Catholic hierarchy has shown itself effectively grateful. If Mr. Gladstone had spared his taunts, and had left the Church alone, English influence might perhaps not have sunk to its present level. Unhappily other motives were working in the Cabinet. False dice have more than once been used in playing with the fortunes of Ireland. The Liberal party needed to be reorganized, and disestablishment was a convenient subject to bring the sections of it into harmony.

The land system, the second branch of the fatal tree, had also not been a success. A conquered people who have yielded only to force must be controlled by a garrison of some kind. If the rule is just and the authority strong, the conquest is in time forgotten. North Wales was once like Ireland; the Welsh were taught submission from the castles at Conway and



Carnarvon; their lands were left untouched, and Wales, which is more Celtic than Mayo, is free and loyal. But that was not a wholesome form of garrison where the officers and men drew their salaries from the people whom they governed, where they might absent themselves at will, and had no superior to call them to account for malfeasance. Very ill the duties of governing had been performed in Ireland by the Anglo-Irish landlords. Yet it might have been remembered that when they would have made the country prosperous England forbade them; that with the establishment of a police, their special ruling functions had passed from them; that they were not even distinctly Protestant any longer. Catholics were free to buy land and had bought it; in 'doing as they pleased with their own,' they had but acted on the latest discovery in English politics; and further, since the famine, nowhere in England itself had more efforts been made for the improvement of the land and those who occupied it than on the estates of the surviving representatives of the old Anglo-Irish proprietors.

It is unsafe anywhere, in Great Britain as much as in Ireland, to trust men with power over the lives and fortunes of their fellow-creatures with no better security than personal character. Such a power is necessarily connected with the ownership of land, and therefore some superior authority ought to be supplied, to which injured occupiers may have easy appeal. I have known cases of tyranny here at home which can match the worst which were ever alleged against the landlords of

Mayo and Galway. But it was not a hopeful project to teach the Irish peasantry that the whole class of Irish proprietors were their natural enemies. It was not wise to describe as a branch of a poison tree an institution which we had guaranteed by Act of Parliament, and maintained as the surest support of English influence in a country which for political reasons we are compelled to hold in subjection. We might call it justice, but we did not believe it to be justice. We were yielding merely to the revived spirit of 1641 and 1798, and capitulating before rebellion and murder.

But Mr. Gladstone went on with his work. He overthrew the Church; he passed a Land Bill giving a protection to the tenantry which has no parallel in any European country. Had he known the people with whom he was dealing he could have foreseen what must inevitably follow. The Irish wolf is again upon us, more ravenous than before. We are told that we are 'within measurable distance of civil war,' and another slice of the landlords' property is to be cut off and flung to him.

If there was a hope that anything which we could give would make the Irish contented and loyal subjects of the British Empire, no sacrifice would be too great for such an object. But there is no such hope. The land tenure is not the real grievance. It is merely the pretext. The real grievance is our presence in Ireland at all. If there was a hope that by buying up the soil and distributing it among the tenantry, we could make them, if not loyal, yet orderly and prosperous, even so the

experiment would be worth trying; but again there is no such hope. The Land Bill of 1870 gave the tenants a proprietary right in their holdings. They have borrowed money on the security of that right at ruinous interest, and the poorest of them are already sinking under their debts to the local banker or tradesman. If we make them proprietors to-morrow, their farms in a few years will be sold or mortgaged. We shall have destroyed one set of landlords to create another who will not be more merciful.

I write with some knowledge of Irish history, and with a personal knowledge, extending over more than forty years, of the people and the country. Mr. Gladstone is a statesman. It is to be presumed that he understands what he is doing, and is prepared for the consequences. He has perhaps recognised that from the date of the Conquest we have neglected every duty which a ruling power owes to its subjects. He desires, therefore, to remove one by one the institutions which we have planted there to defend our interests, and as English rule is the real object of hostility, and the institutions are only the outwork, it is to be presumed also that when the central fort is challenged he is prepared to evacuate it, and to restore Ireland to independence. Home Rule under the Queen's sovereignty is impossible. The administration of Ireland under a local parliament returned by household suffrage would be the transfer of authority to those who are now terrorizing the western counties. The continued connection under the Crown would mean in these circumstances

that the power of Great Britain is to be committed to the support of such a government as would then be established in any policy which it might please to adopt. The people of this country would not consent to occupy such a position, and it is not to be thought of. If Ireland is to be ruled by 'Irish ideas,' and Irish ideas are to be interpreted by the votes of the peasant majority, it must be under the condition that we are no longer responsible.

Were England, even now at this eleventh hour, to say that she recognised the state of Ireland to be a disgrace to her, that she would pass no hurried measure at the dictation of incendiaries, but that deliberately and with all her energies she would examine the causes of her failure, and find some remedy for it, that meanwhile she must be free from political pressure, that the constitution would be suspended, and that the three southern provinces would for half a century be governed by the Crown, the committee of the Land League are well aware that without a shot being fired in the field their functions would be at an end. Quiet people would recover confidence, and the law its authority; and if in that golden period of respite a better order of things could be introduced which would know no difference between rich and poor, but would be just to all, enterprise would take heart again and capital flow into the soil, and the shameful past would be forgotten like a black dream. The curse which has blasted Ireland is anarchy. Not the Church; not the landlords: though Church and landlords have both

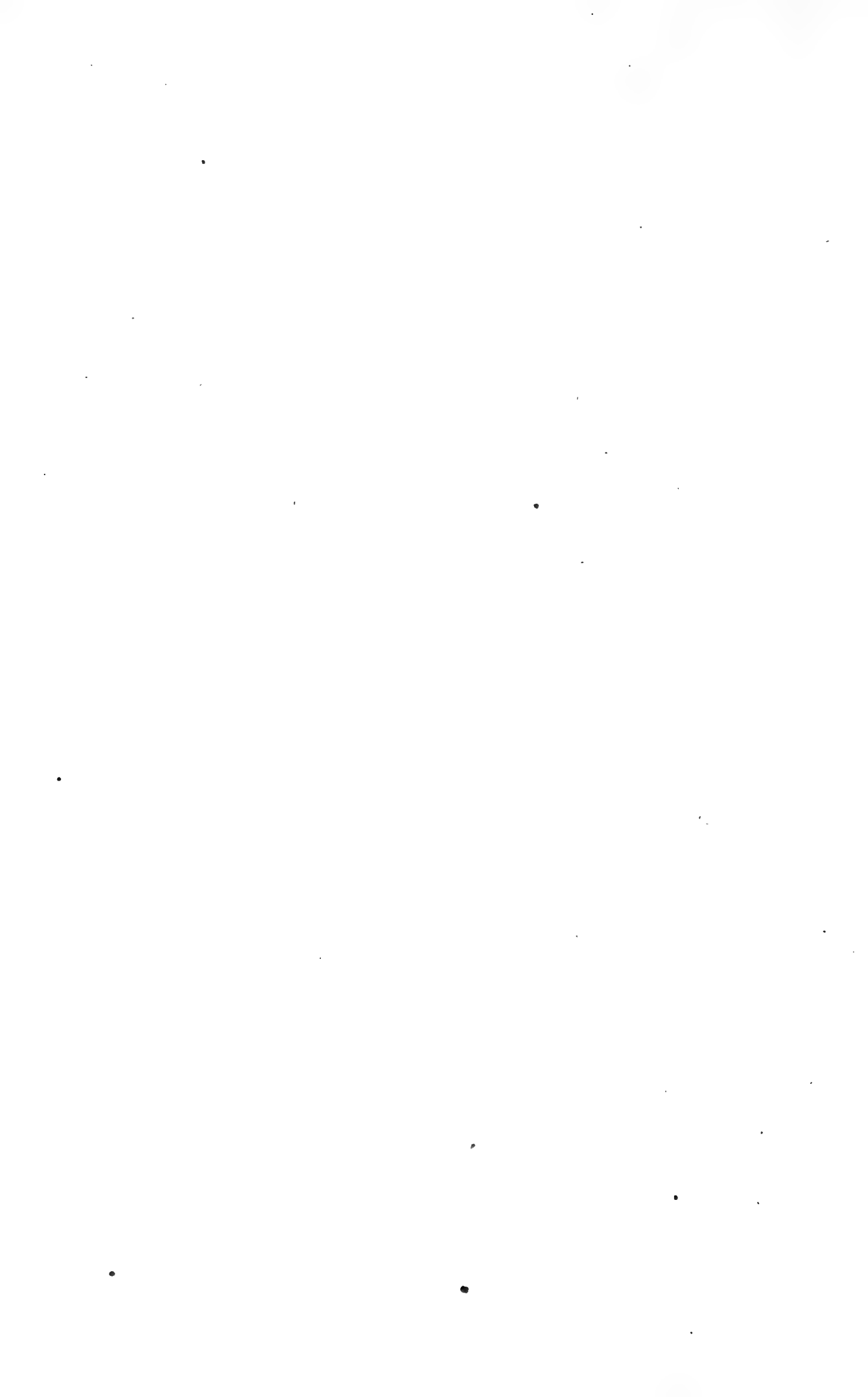
needed mending; but the 'Blatant Beast' which all brave men hate and all cowards tremble at.

On the sign-post of Ireland's destiny the words stand written so clear that all the world can read them, "Here lies the way to peace and prosperity." "Here and by no other road." Mr. Gladstone himself at the bottom of his heart perhaps knows it.

But I am told it is impossible. It is impossible, as the Union was impossible in 1704, as Walpole and his successors found it impossible to allow the Irish free trade, as it was impossible to manage Ireland in the last century except through corruption. Not impossible in the nature of things, but impossible from the nature and conditions of English Parliamentary government,—impossible because inconsistent with the interests and ambitions of the parties into which the English Parliament is divided. If such a resolution was adopted by one Cabinet in a moment of anger and panic, it would be undone by the next. The very quiet which would ensue would be an excuse for a demand for the restoration of constitutional rights. Despotism is out of date. We can govern India: we cannot govern Ireland.

Be it so. Then let Ireland be free. She is miserable because she is unruled. We might rule her, but we will not, lest our arrangements at home might be interfered with. We cannot keep a people chained to us to be perennially wretched because it is inconvenient to us to keep order among them. In an independent Ireland the ablest and strongest would come to the front, and the baser elements be crushed. The state of things

which would ensue might not be satisfactory to us, but at least there would be no longer the inversion of the natural order which is maintained by the English connection, and the compelled slavery of education and intelligence to the numerical majority. This too is called impossible—yet, if we will neither rule Ireland nor allow the Irish to rule themselves, nature and fact may tell us, that whether we will or no, an experiment which has lasted for seven hundred years shall be tried no longer. Between the two ‘impossibilities’ we may be obliged to choose if Ireland is to cease to be our reproach, and the Irish race a danger and a torment to every country to which they emigrate.



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